

A
COLLECTION
OF
CASES,
AND OTHER
DISCOURSES,
Lately Written
To Recover DISSENTERS
TO THE
Communion of the Church
of ENGLAND.

By some DIVINES of the City of *London*.

To which is added,
A DISCOURSE concerning the Inventions of
Men in the Worship of God: By the most
Reverend *William King*, Archbishop of *Dublin*.

The Third VOLUME.

WITH
*A Catalogue of all the Cases and Discourses, with
the Authors Names. Together with Three Tables:
Containing, I. The Contents of each Discourse.
II. The Scriptures Illustrated and Occasionally Ex-
plained. III. The several Authors Cited or Examined.*

The Third Edition.

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L

THE
C A S E
OF THE
CROSS in Baptism
CONSIDERED.

Wherein is shewed,

That there is nothing in it, as it is used
in the Church of *England*, that can be
any just Reason of Separation from it.

THE Matters in Dispute betwixt Us and
our Dissenting Brethren, may generally
seem to the unconcern'd Stander-by of
so slight and inconsiderable Moment,
that he must needs wonder how in the world the
Controversie should come to have risen to that de-
plorable height, which in this last Age it hath done.
And although the Case, which will fall under our
present Debate, seems to have admitted of the most
specious Scruples, and given the best Scope of
Reasoning, of any other thing that hath fallen under
Question amongst us since the Reformation; yet
Vol. III. A even

2 The Case of the Cross in Baptism.

even here also, the * *Immeasurable Byass* of Prejudice, and Fervency of Opposition, hath too apparently manag'd the Argument. So that the Pleas against it have not seem'd so weighty as they have been *numerous*; as if the Objectors had an Eye to that Direction in † *Quintilian*, they would be sure to amass all the weaker Arguments, which though weak in themselves, yet by standing together, may lend a mutual Assistance to one another: Like Articles of Impeachment, none of which singly would perhaps affect the accus'd Person, but all together may amount to accumulative Treason.

My business therefore, in handling this Case, shall not be to follow every nice Scruple, or trivial Objection (as where the Cross in Baptism hath been charged with the breach of every particular Precept in the Decalogue) not to concern my self in any thing, which either by long induction of Consequences hath been far fetcht, or with great Difficulty drawn in, to make a shew of Argument, but, as briefly and plainly as may be, to sum up all that hath ever seem'd of any moment in this matter, and that under this two-fold Head.

I. That the Sign of the Cross hath been so notoriously abus'd to the worst Purposes of Superstition and Idolatry in the Church of Rome, that the retaining of it still amongst us makes us Partakers of the Superstitions and Idolatry of that Church.

II. That it seems the introducing of a *New Sacrament*, which having not the warranty of our Lord and Master Christ Jesus, must needs be a very offensive Invasion of his Right, whose Royal Prerogative alone it is to institute what *Sacraments* he pleaseth in his Church.

Under-

* Ἀμετρία ἀνδολῆς.

† L. 5. c. 20. *Infirmiora Argumenta congreganda sunt, imbecilla enim naturâ mutuo auxilio sustinentur.*

The Case of the Cross in Baptism. 3

Under these two Heads I think may be fairly comprehended all those Objections *our Brethren* have offered against the Sign of the *Cross in Baptism*, at least all those that are any thing material. Inasmuch, that if the Difficulty of these could be removed, we might fairly hope none of the Sober and Conscientious Dissenters but would think themselves obliged to submit to the use of it, rather than maintain the Separation upon this account.

And this shall be endeavour'd with all the Candour and Clearness that becomes the Design of this, and the rest of those Discourses that have been publish'd of this kind, *viz.* to convince and not reproach or provoke any; to effect (if possible) the happy Agreement, and consequently enlarge and strengthen the Interests of good Men. And for this purpose I have thought fit not to quote the Writings of particular Persons, but rather to represent the Objection, as what is in general avow'd and agreed upon by the whole Party.

And although it is not likely that any thing should be *here* offered, that hath not been already with great Learning and Integrity made use of, by the many Assertors of *our Church*; yet perhaps, the bringing this under one View, without the *Warmth* or *Salt* of an Adversary, may not prove altogether vain and ineffectual.

I. I begin therefore with the first Objection, *viz.* *That the Sign of the Cross hath been so notoriously abus'd to the worst purposes of Superstition and Idolatry in the Church of Rome, that the retaining of it still amongst us, makes us Partakers of the Superstitions and Idolatry of that Church.*

I must readily acknowledge, that the Material Figure of the Cross hath been indeed abused to very *Idolatrous* purposes in the *Church of Rome*, and even the Aerial Sign of it to Purposes superstitious and ridiculous enough; and if what we do in using this Sign

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in Baptism, were really chargeable with *Popery*, it would be a sufficient Reason to detest and reject it. The Objection therefore at the first view looks plausible enough, when it thus chargeth this Ceremony of the *Cross*; *Paganism* it self being hardly more odious, nor in Truth (for some very good Reasons amongst wise Men) more ridiculous and intolerable. There is scarce any part of *Popery*, properly so called, but is so plain a depravation of Christianity it self, such a contradiction to the Rules, such a defeat to the great Purposes and Ends of our *Holy Religion*, that it deserves well enough the good Man's justest abhorrency, which he may reasonably express, when he finds himself in any danger of the Snare. But then we must consider, how easie and natural a thing it is for Persons (that otherwise mean honestly enough) to humour a just and reasonable Offence against *Popery*, into groundless Suspicions upon things which have no such tendency at all in them. And upon these first Suspicions not only to startle, and grow a little shy and nice, but to determine themselves in resolved and unmovable Prejudices, that have had Effects ill enough: For upon this, Designing Men have made their Advantage upon every trifling Occasion, giving out the Word, and laying the Charge of *Popery* upon what it hath been their humour or interest to desire or change in. And this probably we shall find to have happened in this *Case* in hand. The Accusation hath been drawn against it, that it is very *Popish*, and the Prejudices which this Accusation hath begot in some honest Minds, are so strong, that they seem invincible. How unreasonably therefore this Charge is laid against our Use of the *Sign of the Cross* in Baptism, may appear, when we have considered these three things.

I. That the Use of this Sign was much more ancient than the first Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*.

II. That

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II. That the Use of it, as it is ordained and appointed in our Church, hath not the least Affinity with the Use of it, as it is in the *Romish* Rituals.

III. Laft. Although it cannot be denied but the *Church of Rome* hath greatly abused this Ceremony to very ill Purposes of Superstition, yet doth not this make it unlawful to continue the Reformed Use of it still amongst us that have professedly separated from the Corruptions of *that Church*.

I. Consider we, that the Use of this Sign of the *Cross* was much more ancient than the first Corruption and Depravation of the *Church of Rome*. When I speak of the *first Corruption and Depravation* of the *Church of Rome*, I would be understood as to those things that have put that Church under the Imputation of what we now call *Papery*. For that there were some depraved Customs crept into the Church in general (and so that of *Rome* perhaps as well as any other) in very early Days, is evident from what *St. Paul* rebukes in the Church of *Corinth*, and from what our Saviour himself in his *Revelations* to *St. John*, condemns in the Seven Churches of *Asia*: So that when I say the Use of the Cross was more ancient than the first Corruption and Depravation of the Church of *Rome*, I mean, more ancient than any of those Corruptions in her, by the reason of which, we have justly esteemed her an *Apostatized Church*, more ancient than either the Introduction of Images, their Multiplication of Sacraments, their Pretensions to Supremacy and Infalibility, or any of those superstitious Rites in Worship, by which we distinguish *that Church* as *Popish*, and brand it as False and *Antichristian*.

As to this therefore, I know none of our Dissenting Brethren, however for a Shift in Argument they

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they may talk of the * *Mystery of Iniquity* beginning to work betimes, and in the first Ages of the Church, that yet do professedly charge any *Signal* Apostacy upon the Church of *Rome*, at least for the first four Hundred Years after Christ; not to the Age wherein *St. Austin* flourish'd; but that it was a Church that might be Communicated with at that time, notwithstanding that Father complained of the Superfæ-tation of Ceremonies even then, which (at least for the number of them) began to be very burdensome. And yet, for an Hundred or two of Years before this, we find in the Writings of *Tertullian* such mention of the Use of this Sign, that makes it very plain, it had been a customary thing long before his Time also, and probably, even amongst those of the Apostolical Age it self. There are those indeed that would make that Father the first that brought in the Use of this Ceremony into the Church, having received it from the *Montanists* of whom he seems to have been particularly fond. But the frequent and familiar mention he makes of the Sign of the Cross in many of his Books, renders this Con-jecture very improbable. *Tertullian* tells us, it was grown so much in Use in his Time, that upon every motion of theirs, at their going out and coming in, when they put on their Garments or Shoes, at the Bath, or at Meals, when they lighted up their Candles, or went to Bed, whatever almost they did in any part of their Conversation, still they would even wear out their Foreheads with the Sign of the Cross †; which though he confesseth there was no express Law of Christ that had enjoyned it, yet Tradition had introduced, Custom had confirmed, and the Believers Faith had observ'd and maintain'd it.

This

* By which Phrase the Apostle in Truth meant, the Secret Work-ings of the Hereticks of that Age.

† *Frontem Crucis signaculo terere.* Tertul. de Coron. mil.

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This doth not look as if it had been a thing newly invented by *Montanus*, and brought into the Church by *Tertullian*, as being himself too great a Favourer of that Sect. Although, were it thus indeed, yet this sheweth that the Practice of it was received among the Faithful, some Ages before the Depravation and Apostacy of the *Romish* Church. But he is not our single Author in this matter: For, * *Origen* who flourish'd not above CC. Years after *Christ*, and not XL. Years after *Tertullian*, makes mention of those who upon their Admission into the Church by Baptism, were signed with this Sign. And *St. Basil* not much above one Hundred Years after him, gives this Usage the Venerable Title of † *an Ecclesiastical Constitution*, or fixt Law of the Church, that had prevailed from the Apostles days, that those who believed in the Name of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, should be signed with the Sign of the Cross.

But of all the Fathers, *St. Cyprian*, who was before *St. Basil*, and very near if not Ccontemporary with *Tertullian* himself, not only speaks most familiarly of the Use of this Sign, but hath some Expressions in this matter, that would seem very harsh and unwarrantable now; and yet, the Authority of that Father, hath saved him hitherto from being brought under question about it. He tells us in one place, that in fronte cruce signantur, qui Dominum promerentur, i.e. they are signed in the Forehead with a Cross who are thought worthy of the Lord; and in another place, Omnia Sacramenta peragit, it Compleats every Sacrament; and per crucem baptismi sanctificatur, Baptism is sanctified by the Cross. I will not stand accountable for the Justifiableness of these Passages, were they to be allowed no kind of Latitude: but, as to the purpose for which they are cited they seem pertinent enough; that is,

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to

* *Homil. 2. in Psalm 38.*

† *Basil de spir. Sanct. cap. 27.*

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to argue the Antiquity of this Usage (and that in the Sacrament of Baptism too) the Phrase so frequently occurring in the Writings of those ancient Fathers, that *fronte signati, being sign'd in the Forehead*, seems a known and usual *Periphrasis* for being enter'd into the Faith of Christ and the Body of his Church by Baptism.

After all which, what need I instance in *St. Cyril*, *St. Ambrose*, or *St. Austin*?* Who sprinkle their Writings with the common mention of this Ceremony, and oftentimes frame Arguments of the Obligation upon Christians to live as becomes them, from this very Badge they wear upon their Foreheads. *St. Austin* wittily enough glorying in the Confidence of a Christian as to a *Crucified Saviour*, that he willingly imprints the Sign of it upon that part of himself which is the proper Seat of Blushing.

I shall only add this Remark further, that after the time wherein this Custom had been so universally receiv'd into the Christian Church, and some of the Fathers had so liberally express'd themselves in it, we may observe, that the first Christian Emperor, *Constantine the Great*, had his Direction's probably from Heaven it self, to make this Sign the great Banner in his Wars, with this additional Encouragement, that † *by this he should overcome*. That this *Dream* or *Vision* (call it which we will, for Histories mention it differently) was from Heaven, and a thing of great reality, is evident, from the success of that Prince's Arms under it.

The Authors of the Centuries allow a considerable Signification in that Sign, as given him from Heaven, as the future Standard he should fight under, viz. that God had admonish'd him by that Sign of the Cross, and

* Nec nos pudet Crucifixi, sed ubi pudoris signum est, crucis ejus signum habemus. *August. in Galat. 6. 14.*

† Ἐν τούτῳ νικά.

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and the Motto added to it, By this thou shalt overcome,
* concerning the Knowledge and Worship of the true God,
and of our Lord Jesus Christ, in Memorial of which he
took care to have it painted on his Banner, that it might
be as the Symbol of the Christian Religion.

Now we would not suppose that our Blessed Lord
would by so immediate a Revelation from Heaven,
countenance such a Rite as this, already received
and made use of in the Church, giving it to Con-
stantine both as a Symbol of his Profession, and
Pledge of his future Victories, if he had resented it
before as Superstitious or any way Unwarrantable.
This kind of Standard the Roman Emperors succes-
sively had born before them in their Wars. Nay it is
recorded, that † Julian himself (probably from what
he had made some former Observations of) could
not forbear defending himself with this Sign, upon a
mighty Fright he was seiz'd with, while in the use
of Magick Arts he went to have consulted with the
Devil. This || Nazianzen calls his craving Age,
and Refuge of him whom he had persecuted; which (by
the way) might give us the Modesty and Caution of
showing our selves too petulant against what it hath
pleased our Lord Jesus, in a Revelation from Hea-
ven, to give the Figure of, and the Holy Spirit also
to signalize sometimes by very renowned Miracles,
which those that consult Ecclesiastical Histories of
best Authority cannot but be convinc'd of.

So that we find the Use of it very ancient, and
the Effects of it very memorable; Casaubon him-
self (no very fond Man of Rituals) calls it ** *Primi-
tivæ Ecclesiæ Symbolum ejus fiduciæ quam in Christo &
cruce ipsius, & passione ponebant: A Symbol the Primi-
tive*

* Cent. 4. cap. 13.
|| Orat. Cont. Julian.

† Theodoret. Hist. l. 3. cap. 3.
** Exercit. in Baronium.

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tive Church used, to denote that Confidence they had in Christ, his Cross and Passion.

I confess it would be a fond thing to endeavour, with some of the *Romish Church*, to trace up the Antiquity of the Cross to the first Creation of Man, and so all along downward to the actual Death of our Blessed Lord. They can spy out the Cross in the Figure of a Man's Face, by the placing of the Nose betwixt the two Eyes, and much more in the Position of the whole Body of the Man with his Arms extended. They can discern it in the Sword in Paradise, and in the Cross stick that Noah's Dove brought back into the Ark, * &c.

And indeed some of the Fathers bend their Imaginations something that way, and would fancy the Figure of the Cross in Moses's stretching out his Arms whilst the Israelites were fighting with Amalek; in the Paschal Lamb, when the Spit went through it, &c. which, however they were Conceits to much suiting that way of allegorizing that some of them were fond of, yet doth it at least confirm what I am now upon, I mean the ancient Reception of this Sign into the Primitive Church. Nay, I may further add, that in some of the Passages they have of this kind, the hint they take may not deserve perhaps to be absolutely exploded, as if there were no weight or moment at all in it. I will crave leave to instance particularly in one thing, which some of the Fathers do a little insist upon, and that is, that Mark, in Ezek. 9 4. that was to be set upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh, &c.

This Mark in several of the ancient Versions, is supposed to be the *Hebrew Tau*, which St. Hierom tells us, in the Samaritan Character, like our T, and so made the figure of the Cross, from whence he collects

* See the Notes of *Laur. le Bar* upon *Tertull. advers. Marcion.* l. 3. p. 178, 179.

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collects, that this was *signum crucis quæ in Christianorum frontibus pingitur*, A Token of that Cross that is imprinted upon the Forehead of the Christian. If St. Hierom be not mistaken in the Samaritan Character, his Conjecture in the Application of it is not very unjustifiable ; because, as *all the Promises are in Christ Jesus, yea, and in him Amen*, 2 Cor. 1. 20. so all the Prophecies of old, where they concerned any signal Advantages or Deliverances to the Jewish Church, had the Assurance of them frequently confirmed by some hint or remembrance of the *Messiah*, that was afterward to be revealed. Thus in that Confirmation that *Isaiah* was to give to *Ahaz* of his present Deliverance from the Invasions of *Ephraim* and *Syria*, he gives him this Sign, *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son*, Isa. 7. 4. How could that great Event that was not to come to pass of so many Ages after *Ahaz* his Death, affect him, who stood in need of so immediate Deliverance, but that it was brought in as an instance (not only that as God could bring about such a Wonder, as the Birth of a Child from a Virgin, could as easily relieve *Judah* in its present Streights ; but further) he that had so gracious a Design towards them, as to send the *Messiah* amongst them, would in the Prospect he had to that, shew now his particular regards for the Church at this time. In Analogy to this, might this Passage in *Ezekiel* look towards that Mark which Christians in after-Ages should wear upon their Foreheads, as a present Symbol of the escape of those that should be found *fighting for the Abominations that were then done in Israel*. And to this probably may that *Seal of the Living God*, have some Reference, which was to be set upon the Foreheads of the Servants of God, Rev. 7. 2, 3. For, as they are there reckon'd up by the number of *twelve times twelve*, to signify that they are the true and genuine Off-spring of the Twelve Apostles ; so,
the

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the *Seal of the living God upon their Foreheads**, may point at the Figure of the Cross, to betoken them (tho' under the Prophetick Denomination of the *Jewish Tribes*) to be of the *Christian Church*. This I would not be supposed to lay any great stress of Argument upon, only offer the Conjecture to the Candour of the Reader.

And thus having shewn the Antiquity of this Sign, as it was received into the Church long before the Corruptions of *Popery* appeared in the World; I know but of one thing that can be urg'd to take off the Strength of what hath been hitherto said; and that is, That the Primitive Christians might probably take up this Custom of thus Signing themselves, because they lived wholly amongst the Enemies of the Cross of Christ, the *Jews making the Cross a Stumbling-block, and the Greeks Foolishness*. So that their Design of doing it, was only to bear their Testimony to the Faces of both; that is, though the Cross was Scandal to the one, and Scorn and Laughter to the other, yet they would not be ashamed of this Cross, but made it the Badge of their Profession. Whereas we live in an Age and Nation, where (thanks be to God) there seems no such occasion, because Christianity is the Religion we openly and universally profess.

To this I answer, that this Objection being thus made, doth at least suppose the Usage of the Cross not to be a thing that is in it self Evil, because if so, no good End or Design in using it could hallow the Action; so that the Ceremony is not Evil in it self, but that upon some weighty Reasons it might be brought into the Church; if so, then we might reasonably think, that the injunction of Authority in this Case might justify the Practice of it. But much more, if the Reason now alledg'd might be a just occasion for the Church in its first Ages to take the

Usage

* *Vid. Med. in Loc.*

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Usage up, God knows, the occasion may be as urgent still upon an equally sad Account; and that is, the Prophane and Atheistical Contempt that is thrown, not so much upon the Sign as the Doctrine of the Cross, by the pretended Wits of our Age. He hath a very slender concernment for the Interests of Religion, that is not sensibly touch'd with those Blasphemous Raileries he may every where meet with upon the whole Scheme of Christianity, especially that which we make the great Foundation of our Hopes and Trust, viz. the Merits of our Saviour's Cross and Passion. That the use of this Sign, if ever it was reasonable upon such a score as this, it is so now. And St. Cyprian's Caution is strong and pertinent enough at this time of the Day, against all the Wit and Pride of the daring and haughty Atheist, *Muniatur frons**, &c. *Arm your Foreheads, that the Seal of God may be kept safe, q. d. Remember the Badge you took upon you in Baptism, and so long as you have that upon your Foreheads, never be ashamed or laugh'd out of countenance, as to the Memory of your Saviour's Love, and the Foundation of your Hopes laid in his Death and Passion.*

And now, since it is so evident how ancient a Practice this hath been in the Christian Church, I would not have this part of the Argument pretended further than it was first design'd, which was only to shew that this Ceremony hath nothing owing in it to that which we call *Popery*, because it was establish'd in the Church so long before that *Mystery of Iniquity* had its being. And tho' through the Antiquity of it (if warrantable at the first) it becomes so much the more venerable, and might justly lay some Restraints upon the modest Christian in his Censures against it; yet doth not this put it beyond the degree of an *Indifferent Ceremony*, without which the
Sacrament

* Epist. 56. ad Thiberitanos.

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Sacrament of Baptism is declared by our Church as compleat and perfected. Did the Antiquity of its Practice make it necessary, it might prove as necessary almost in every Action of Life, as well as Baptism, because (as I have noted before) *Tertullian* tells us, it was once so used. No, it only gives us the warrant of Doing it, because practis'd in the most incorrupt Ages of Christianity; and the necessity of keeping it still in use, lies not so much in that it was the Custom of some Church, or Constitution of some Council in former Days, as that it is the Custom of our Church now, and the appointment of our Governours. But,

Secondly, It is further considerable, that the Use of the Cross, as it is ordained and appointed in our Church, hath not the least Affinity with the Use of it, as it is in the *Romish Rituals*.

1. We do by no means allow any visible Images of a crucified *Jesus*, so as to have the least concern in any part of our Worship. There is no mention of them in our Rubrick; there is hardly in any Writings of the Doctors of our Church, one Passage to be found of that Latitude, that Mr. *Baxter*, amongst his calmest Thoughts hath adventur'd to say, that is, that a *Crucifix* well befitteth the Imagination and Mind of a Believer*; nay further, that it is not unlawful to make an Image, (and gives the Instance particularly of a *Crucifix*) to be the objectum vel medium excitans ad cultum Dei, an Object or Medium of our Consideration, exciting our Minds to worship God. The Sense of our Church is truly express'd in this Matter by Mr. *Hooker*, who tells us, † *That between the Cross which Superstition honoureth as Christ, and that Ceremony of the Cross, which*

* Christian Direct. Ecclesiastical Cases, qu. 113. p. 875. *Ibid.* p. 876.

† *Eccles. Pol.* 1. 5. p. 348.

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which serveth only for a Sign of Remembrance, there is as plain and great a Difference, as between those brazen Images which Solomon made to bear up the Cistern of the Temple, and that which the Israelites in the Wilderness did adore. Or between those Altars which Josias destroyed, because they were Instruments of meer Idolatry, and that which the Tribe of Reuben, with others, erected near the River Jordan to far other purposes. Ours is no other than a meer transient, or (as others express it) aerial Figure of the Cross, which comes not within the widest Notion of an Image; or if it were so, is so very transient, that it abides not so long as to be capable of becoming any object or medium of Worship, any further than any Words we use in Worship may do.

2. The Use even of this transient Sign bears no kind of Conformity or Likeness with the Use of it in the Church of Rome. They use it upon numberless Occasions beside Baptism. If they enter in, or go out of Church, or a Friend's House; when they say their Prayers, or are present at any Religious Solemnity; if startled at Thunder, taken in a Storm, frightened with a Spectrum, or are surpriz'd with any kind of Fear or Astonishment, they bless themselves still, and take Refuge under this Sign of the Cross, which they will make upon themselves: If they visit the Sick, administer the Extream Unction, or indeed perform any of their other Sacraments (so called by them) the transient Sign of the Cross must begin and close all. But then in the Sacrament of Baptism, the use of this Sign is so exceedingly different, as well in the nauseous Repetitions of it before and afterward, in the Forehead, in the Mouth, and upon the Breast; as also, the monstrous Significations according to the divers Places whereon it is imprest, that nothing can be more: Beside, that it not used at the Time, nor with the Form of Words that we use it with. So that there is not the least

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least Agreement betwixt us and them, either in the Use, or in the Significancy of this Ceremony; and so no reasonable Offence can be taken at it, upon any Symbolizing of *ours* with the *Church of Rome* in it. All this might be further confirmed, by giving a particular view of the *Roman Ritual*, as to what respects their * Office for Baptism, but this is done by a better hand upon another Case of this kind.

Lastly, Although it cannot be denied, but the *Church of Rome* hath greatly abus'd this Ceremony to very ill Purposes of Superstition, yet doth not this make it unlawful to continue the reformed Use of it amongst us, that have professedly separated from the Corruptions of *that Church*. It is a Principle that some of our *Brethren* imagine they are very well fortified in, from some Instances in the *Old Testament*, viz. That whatever hath been abus'd to Idolatrous or Superstitious Purposes, should *eo nomine* be abolish'd. But perhaps they would find this much more a Question than they have hitherto presum'd, if they would consider, that if this Principle were true, it would go nigh to throw a Scorn upon all or most of the Reformations that have been made from the *Church of Rome*; for they do not seem to have govern'd themselves by this Rule. Some of them in their publick Confessions declaring, that they might lawfully retain such Rites or Ceremonies as are of advantage to Faith, the Worship of God, or Peace and Order in the Church, † *though they had been introduced by any Synod, or Bishop, or Pope, or any other.*

It is a Principle that would render *Christianity* impracticable, because no Circumstance, no Instrument, no Ministry in Worship, but may have been some way or other abused and defecrated by *Pagan* or *Romish*

* See *Case about the Church of Eng. Symbolizing with the Church of Rome*, p. 10, 11, 12.

† *Confess. Bohem. Art. 15.*

Romish Idolatries. It would make every Garment, of what shape, or of what colour soever, unfit for use in our Religious Services; for not only the White, but the Red, the Green, and the Black, have been us'd (even for the Significancy of their respective Colours) by the *Gentile* or *Romanist*, to very superstitious Purposes in Divine Worship. It would condemn the Practice of those very Persons that would pretend this to be their Principle; for they have few of them carried it to that height, as to abolish *Churches, Fonts, or other Utenfils*, but have thought fit to make use of them in the same Services of Religion as formerly, though not in those Modes by which they were abus'd to Superstition and Idolatry. All which they should not do, if either the Principle had any real Foundation in it self, or they acted in any due Consistency, with the Principle they pretend.

That which our *Dissenting Brethren* urge, (as they think) of the greatest force and pertinency in this matter, is the Example of *Hezekiah*, who when he found the *brazen Serpent*, which God himself had directed to be set up for the healing of those that had been stung with *Fiery Serpents*, abus'd to downright Idolatry; He would not endeavour to recover it to the first Design of its Preservation, that is, to keep it standing only as a Memorial of God's Power and Goodness, who had done such great and beneficial Things amongst them by it; but without any more ado, takes it away from all farther view of the People, breaks it in Pieces, and calls it **Nehushtan*, i.e. lets the People see it was a *thing of Brass*, and nothing else.

To this I answer, First, Although it is very natural to Mankind, to govern themselves more by Example than Precept, yet Arguments fetcht from

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* 2 Kings 18. 4.

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Examples generally are not the truest way of reasoning ; and that partly upon this very account, namely, the Proneness we have toward Example, and Byas and Prejudice we may the easilier be drawn away with upon that account. But chiefly, because in alledging Examples it is very rare that we can hit the Case perfectly right. It may be said of *Examples*, as it is of *Similitudes*, they seldom do *Currere quatuor pædibus*, they do not perfectly reach the thing intended to be prov'd, but are so widely different, or defective in some one or other Circumstance, that there is not that parity of Reason that ought to be ; and the varying of Circumstances may much alter the Case ; which very thing apparently falls out in this very instance : For certainly, if the Example be concern'd in any thing with respect to our Practice, it may seem to prove nothing further than the necessity of taking away (not what hath been used only to Idolatrous Purposes, but) what it self hath been, and at that instant is, a meer Idol. This was the Circumstance of the *brazen Serpent*, it was by Custom become a real Idol ; it had been so for a long time, was so at that instant, when *Hezekiah* brake it to pieces : *To those days the Children of Israel did burn Incense unto it.* So that thus far perhaps this instance might affect us, that were there any *Crucifix*, or material Image of our Saviour upon the Cross, now standing, to which People for some Ages had given, and for the generality did still give Divine Honour, it would then indeed concern the Government, in the Reformation from the Idolatries of the *Church of Rome*, to take away and abolish this and all other *Images* of this kind. This perhaps answers the Pattern pretty much, and copieth out *Hezekiah's* wise and good Action ; and this accordingly is entirely done in our Church, there being no such Image abiding now amongst us to which any Adoration is publickly avow'd, or that can be pretended

tended to have such Snare in it, as to hazard any general Idolatry. What proportion doth our *Aerial sign of the Cross* (toward which there is no intention, nor indeed any possibility of giving any Divine Worship) what Proportion doth this bear to the Material Figure of the Brazen Serpent, to which they had for a long time *burnt Incense*, did it to those very days, and gave such Evidence of their Inveteracy in Idolatry, that there seemed no moral likelihood of preventing it by any other Course, than breaking the Idol to pieces, and letting them see what a meer lump of Brass they had been worshipping? But then,

2. If Example were a good way of Arguing, we find by *Hezekiah's* Practice in other things, he did not think it an indispensable Duty in him to abolish every thing that had been made use of to Idolatry, if they did not prove an immediate Snare at that time; for as to *Temples*, which *Solomon* had erected for no other End but the Worship of false Gods in them, 1 King. 11. 7. *Hezekiah* did not make it his Business to destroy them, as being in his time forlorn and neglected things, of which no bad Use was then made. Although indeed King *Josiah* afterward (probably upon the encrease of Idolatry, and renewed use of those places) found it expedient to lay them wholly waste, 2 Kings 23. 13.

And thus much I have thought fit to say as to that first Head of Objection against the sign of the Cross, as it is cryed out against as a *Relick of Popery*, and had been so deprav'd by the superstitious use of it in the Church of *Rome*. I cannot but acknowledge this to be the weakest part of their Plea against it; and probably our Brethren know it to be so too: yet, because it is most affecting among common People, and seem to have made the deepest Impression upon those that are not so well fitted for profound and solid Reasoning, I have chosen to be the larger here,

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that even the meanest Capacities may see that the Sign of the Cross, as we use it, was not introduc'd by the Church of *Rome*, but was of a much ancienter date: That the Use we make of it bears no Conformity at all with *that Church* in their using it; that by our different Usage we keep at a sufficient Distance; nay, perhaps are in less likelihood of falling into the Snare of their Communion, than if it had been utterly abolish'd: In a word, that that very Principle, upon which the Charge of Popery is laid as an Argument against the Cross, is it self weak and fallible; nor are we bound by any Precept or Example in Holy Writ, to throw off the use of any one thing meerly because the Church of *Rome* hath abused it. It hath proved a mighty Inconvenience to the Church, that People have been thrown into so precipitant a Zeal of removing themselves to the utmost Extrems from the Church of *Rome*, that they have been almost afraid to determine in any Action or Circumstance of Divine Worship, lest it should some way or other have been prophaned and made unwarrantable by their Practice. This is that gave rise to the mischievous Enthusiasms in *Germany*, that ended in such bloody and barbarous Practises, as well as senseless and ridiculous Principles taken up and maintain'd by the Anabaptists there. I am loth to mention the horrid Confusions of our own Age and Nation, which yet perhaps we were wrought up into by this very Humour; I mean a restless Fondness for some additional Refinements still, which our Church had not thought fit to make.

I cannot but inwardly reverence the Judgment, as well as love the Temper, of our first Reformers, who in their first Separations from *Rome*, were not nice or scrupulous beyond the just Reasons of things. Doubtless they were in earnest enough, as to all true Zeal against the Corruptions of *that Church*, when they

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they seal'd the well-grounded Offence they took at them, with their warmest Blood; and cheerfully underwent all the Hardships that Primitive Christians signalized their Profession with, rather than they would intermix with *Rome*, in any Usage, of Worship, or Article of Faith that had the least favour of Idolatry, Superstition, or false Religion at all in it. And yet these Holy and Wise Men, when they had the Power and Opportunity of Reforming wholly in their Hands, being equally jealous of *Enthusiasm* as they were of *Superstition*, would not give themselves up to those *fantastick Antipathie*, as to abolish this or that Ceremony, meerly because it had been in use amongst the Papists, if some other very substantial Reason did not put in its Claim against it. And verily, had they not governed themselves in these temperate and unbyast Methods of Reformation, they would not so easily have justified themselves to their Adversaries, or the World; or have made it so evident (as by their wise Management they did) that what was done by them was from the meer Urgencies of Conscience and Reason, and not the wantonness of Change and Innovation. So that where any mean Honestly (as I doubt not but many of those do, that dissent from us in this particular Circumstance of the Cross in Baptism) they ought to have their Reason very well awake, that the meer Charge of *Poperie* upon any disputed Point, may not so prejudice them in their Enquiries into things, as to leave no room for Debate and Mature Consideration.

Secondly, The other Head of Objection against the Cross in Baptism is, *that it seems the introducing of a new Sacrament, which having not the warrant of our Lord and Master Christ Jesus, must needs be a very offensive invasion of his Rights, whose Royal Prerogative alone it is, to institute what Sacraments he pleaseth in his Church.*

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This Objection seems to point at a twofold Argument. The one, with respect in common to all those Circumstances in Worship, which for Decency and Order, are appointed by the Governours of the Church, but not antecedently prescrib'd and enjoyn'd in the Word of God. For to this, our *Dissenting Brethren* have generally affirm'd it a bold and unwarrantable Intrusion upon our *Lord and Master*, who was *faithful to him that appointed him*, as also *Moses was faithful in all his House*, that is, in prescribing to the *Jews* all their Modes and Usages in Worship, from which they were not to vary or deviate, to add or diminish in any one Circumstance.

This I shall take no further notice of, than as it may necessarily intermix it self with the Question particularly in hand about the *Cross in Baptism*, partly because I would keep as strictly as may be to this distinct Case, and especially, because this Case [of doing nothing in or about the Worship of God, but what is expressly prescrib'd and appointed by him in his word] hath been another's Province; so that I shall only say, the Customs of the Jewish Church it self (which our Brethren would make their main instance in this Matter) do make directly against it. They did unquestionably take up some Usages wherein *Moses* had given no antecedent Directions, which yet it is evident were not unlawful upon that Account, because our *Blessed Lord* did not only *not blame* or *accuse* them of Encroachment or Superstition, but himself practis'd and complied with them; this, amongst many other things, hath been clear'd up in the instance of their Synagogue-Worship, and upon another Occasion may be further insisted on by and by. Besides it is plain, this was no Rule amongst the Primitive Christians in the first Ages of the Gospel, not to add the Inexpediency and Unfitness of this Rule to the very Oeconomy and Dispensation of Christianity, which was to diffuse it self amongst all

all Nations, and all Kinds of People, who did so infinitely differ from one another, both in their Customs, and in the Significations of those Customs too, that it must have been a vast and bulky Digest of Laws indeed, that must have suited all Countries, were every Circumstance and Punctilio in Divine Worship to have been antecedently prescrib'd. All this hath been with so much Clearness made out by several Hands, that I am apt to think at this time of the Day, our Brethren do not expect or stand in need of further Conviction in this Point, and seem in some measure agreed, that this Position of theirs will not hold water.

It is the other part of the Objection therefore, that will fall more directly under our Consideration at this present, and that is, that our using the *sign of the Cross* in Baptism, doth seem to run into the Nature of a *new Sacrament*. And this is that they mean, when they tell us, *It is an outward visible Sign of an inward Invisible Grace, whereby a Person is dedicated to the profession of, and subjection to the Redeemer.* That it is a *dedicating means to consecrate us to God*; That it *signifies our covenanting Engagement, and is as a Badge and Symbol of the Christian Religion*; That it *represents Christ dying on the Cross, and signifies our being listed under Christ*; That it is an *addition to Baptism*; That it *adds another Sacrament to Baptism*; and that it is used as an *engaging Sign, in our first and solemn covenanting with Christ, and the Duties whereunto we are really obliged by Baptism, are more expressly affixt to that Aery Sign than to the Holy Sacrament*; with many other Expressions of this kind, which we may find interspers'd in the several Writings of the Nonconformists, where they take occasion to dispute this Ceremony. This of the Crosses having at least the semblance of a Sacrament, is indeed the only Objection the Presbyterian Brethren insist upon in their Exceptions against some Passages in the present Liturgy.

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As to this therefore, first, I must needs say, I have some times wonder'd that the word *Sacrament* it self hath been so well agreed upon amongst us. The Fathers have used it so much at large in their Writings, that it would sometimes be difficult to understand what they mean by it ; And *our Brethren*, upon the same Reasons by which several other Exceptions have been made, might have disallow'd and rejected it as a word by no means *Scriptural*, but *Pagan* and *Heathenish*. However, since by a long reception of the word into the Church, it seems agreed on all Sides, what the Sense and Acceptation of it should be, my Business will be to shew, 1. What we are agreed in as to the Notion of a Sacrament, and then, 2. To make it plain, that as *our Church* never did design or intend, by the use of the Cross in Baptism, to make any *new Sacrament* of it ; so, in the nature of the Thing, it hath not any *semblance of a Sacrament* according to the Notion of a Sacrament that both sides are agreed in.

First, As to our being agreed in the Notion of a Sacrament, I must presume our Church in her publick Catechism, hath given that definition of it, which no Reformed Church but approves and allows of. That is, *that it is an outward and visible Sign of an inward and spiritual Grace given to us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a Pledge to assure us thereof.* It is true, the Assembly of Divines, in their larger Catechism, do in that Question of theirs [*What is a Sacrament ?*] put in an Expression or two, that point at some Opinions, wherein they may be no more agreed amongst themselves, than they are with some of our Church. But then, in their next Question [*What are the parts of a Sacrament ?*] they give us the same Account with that of our Church-Catechism, only a little varied in the Words, *viz. The parts of a Sacrament are two, the one an outward sensible sign, used according to Christ's*

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own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual Grace thereby signified. By all which it is evident, we are well enough agreed in the common Acceptation of the word *Sacrament*. And therefore,

Secondly, I proceed to shew, that as our Church never did design or intend by the use of the Cross in Baptism, to make any *new Sacrament* of it, so according to the common Notion wherein we are agreed as to the word *Sacrament*, there is not *any semblance of a Sacrament* it can justly be charg'd with.

And here I might, not without some reason, insist, that as we are agreed in the definition of a *Sacrament*, that both the *outward Sign must signify an inward spiritual Grace*, and also must have its *express Institution and Appointment* from Christ, we that never suppos'd the use of the Cross in Baptism could confer Grace, nor have ever made the least Pretext to any Divine Appointment for it, ought not to be charg'd as introducing a *new Sacrament*, when it hath no Pretensions to any one thing that is of the Essence of a *Sacrament*. But I am willing to follow the Argument as they have laid it. They say therefore, that however, we do not call or account it an *Holy Sacrament*, yet forasmuch as we bring a Ceremony into the Church, which in the Significations of it seems *tantamount* to a Christian Sacrament, we do thereby usurp the Prerogative of our great Lord and Master, *setting up our Posts against his Post, and our Threshold against his Threshold*.

This they say we do partly, 1. As to make the Cross a Sign betokening our Faith and Christian Courage, when in applying it to the baptized Person, we say we do it in token that *hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, &c.* And partly, 2. When by an entire Representative of our Church it is determined, that by the Sign of the Cross the baptized Person is *dedicated to the service of him that died upon the Cross*.

First,

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First, they say, that by making the Sign of the Cross, *in token that hereafter, &c.* we apply such Significations to it, that run it into the nature of a Sacrament, using it as *an outward visible Sign of an inward Spiritual Grace.* As to this, we must ingenuously confess, that we make use of no Rite or Ceremony in our Church, but it is with this Design, that it should be significant of some thing or other. It would be an odd piece of Pageantry indeed, to use this or that Gesture or Action in our Religious Services, that should have no Signification at all in it, and to account it therefore *Innocent* because it were *Impertinent.* It is the Significancy of it, that makes it useful or proper, and if there were nothing of that in it, it would be very disallowable. But then, though our Ceremonies are significant, and any of them us'd as Memorative Signs to put us in mind of any Duty or Obligation toward God, they are not therefore *an outward visible Sign of an inward spiritual Grace*; that is, they are not in the Nature of any Seal or Assurance from God of his *Grace* to us, but Hints and Remembrances of some Obligation we are under, with respect to God. And that this kind of significant Usages have been all along arbitrarily taken up, without any Imputation of *introducing a new Sacrament*, may be made out, both from the Practice of the *Jewish Church*, notwithstanding the punctual Prescriptions delivered to them by *Moses*; from the Practice of the *Christian Church*, and that both in the very first Ages of it, and also in all the later Reformations that have been made.

First, take we a view of the *Jewish Church*; and herein,

1. We may observe, that in their very Passover, about which both Thing and Circumstances they had such express Directions by *Moses* before they went out of *Egypt*, yet did they in some Ages following considerably vary, not only in their time of
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keeping it, which having been originally appointed on the *Tenth*, they changed it to the *Fourteenth* day of the Month, but in the Gesture too. In the first institution of it they were to *eat it with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand*, and all as a token of the haste they were then in. This gesture of eating the Passover it is not so certain how long it continued in the *Jewish Church*, after their coming out of *Egypt*, as it is unquestionable it was changed into a *discumbing* Posture (that is, a posture wherein they took their ordinary Meals) long before the Days of our Saviour, and that so warrantably too, that our Saviour himself used it. And yet, this very Posture they had taken up (if we will believe an Expositor, that was no great Friend to the Ceremonies of *our Church*) had its Signification too; for he tells us, that they did it in *sign of their rest and security otherwise than they had in Egypt*.

2. Another instance in the *Jewish Church* might be that of the *Altar of Witness*, Josh. 22. which *Phineas*, after he had made a jealous Enquiry upon, approv'd of, as a standing Memorial that they on the other side *Jordan* profess the true God, had Relation to the other Tribes, and a Right to the Service of God in the *Tabernacle of the Congregation*.

3. But that which seems to come nearest us, is what the Jewish Authors do frequently take notice of, and that is, that as to those whose Office entitled them to the *Anointing* (which by all that doth very evidently appear, were only *Kings* and *Priests*) although the *Anointing Oyl*, as to its Confection and Ingredients, and the manner of doing it (as one would think) were particularly enough prescribed by God; yet did the *Jews* amongst themselves bring in the use of a Significative Sign in doing it, which seems nowhere disallowed, or charged as an invasion of God's Holy Institutions: This was to Anoint the
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Heads of their *Kings* with the Figure of a ** *Crown*, and their *Priests* with the Figure of an *Hebrew* ך or the *Greek* χ. Not to add that the *Synagogue Worship*, the *Rites of Marriage*, the *Form of taking Oaths*, and the like, things that had great Significations in them, had not the expresse Institution of God for their warranty, and yet well enough receiv'd in the purest Times of the Jewish Church, and complied with by our Saviour himself.

Secondly, Take we a view of the Christian Church, and that, both as to the first Ages of it, and all the latter Reformations that have been made. 1. We may observe even from the Days of the Apostles themselves, the Church hath taken the Liberty of making use of one Rite or other that hath signified things of greatest weight and moment, to instance in a two-fold Custom, primitively used amongst Christians, that lookt much more Sacramentally than our use of the Cross in Baptism, that is, the institution of them seemed Apostolical, being frequently mentioned in their Holy Writings; and they were immediately annext to the Holy Eucharist, and in their Signification bore some analogy with what that Sacrament it self was in part the Token and Seal of, these were the *Holy Kifs*, and the *Agapæ* or *Feasts of Charity*.

The *Holy Kifs* was perform'd (as the best *Writers generally conceive) after all other Preparations, immediately before they entred upon the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*; and at the close and upshot of the whole Solemnity; from whence *Tertullian* gives it the term of *signaculum orationis*, the *Seal of Prayer*. This the Apostle is supposed to direct to, when he enjoyns the *Corinthians* to greet one another with an holy kifs, 1 Cor. 16. 20. And this was kept up with that Reverence in † *Tertullian's* Time, that he speaks as

** *Maimon. H Malachim.*

* *Dr Cave's Prim. Christ. part. I. Chap. 11. p. 346. 352.*

† *Que oratio cum divortio sancti osculi integra? Tert. de Orat.*

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as if the Service of the Publick Prayers were maim'd and imperfect, if it concluded not with this *Kiss*. This was used in *token* of the mutual Communion and Fellowship that Christians had with one another, and the unfeigned reconciliation of their Minds, that they came with no inward Heart-burnings against one another, being that great Christian Grace and Virtue so much insisted upon in our Saviour's Gospel, and after that by his Apostles made one great Evidence of the Professors having *pass'd from Death to Life*. And yet, that this Custom had not its Foundation in any *Divine Appointment*, but the voluntary use the Church made of it, seems agreed to on all hands; because afterward, it is not only prohibited by some Councils, but by an universal Consent in all Churches, wholly laid aside, and grown out of all use.

Again we may observe, as to that Custom of the *Agapæ* or *Feasts of Charity*, 1 Cor. 11. 20. 21. which in the Apostles Days probably were celebrated immediately before the *Lord's Supper*, and in some Ages afterward, not till the *Holy Communion* was finished. But, whether they had them before, or after, it is certain they had great Significations in them, not only of Christians mutual Love and Communion, but also, of the equal regard that God and our Blessed Lord had towards all sorts and conditions of Men; the Poor as well as the Rich, those of meaner Degree and Quality, as well as the High and Noble, when they were all to eat freely together at one Common Meal. This the Apostle seems to point at, in the Remarks he makes upon the Disorders in the Church at *Corinth*, that in their Love-Feasts, *every one taketh before other his own Supper*, and so did *despise the Church of God*. And *those that had Houses to Eat and Drink in, shamed those that had not*. Now, though this Custom was hallowed by the Practice of the Apostles, and had so great Significations in it, and was from the first so annex to the Holy *Eucharist*,

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charist, that it always either begun or concluded it, and consequently lookt much more Sacramentally, than our *Sign of the Cross* in Baptism can be supposed to do; yet it is plain, by the universal Disuse of it in these latter Ages of the Church, that it self never was esteemed any *Sacrament*.

I might further instance in the Ceremony of *Insufflation*, or breathing upon the Person that was to be Baptized, called by one of the Fathers * *an ancient Tradition*, which they used as a Sign of *expelling the Evil Spirit, and breathing into them the Good Spirit*; this seemed to signifie more the *Grace of God*, than *Duty of the Christian*, and yet not suspected as any Sacrament. Thus the Baptized Persons stripping off his Garment in token that *he put off the Old Man, which was corrupt according to his deceitful Lusts*, doth it not look full as *Sacramentally* as our Cross in Baptism? Yet we find it anciently practised, without any Jealousie of invading the *Prerogative of Christ, in instituting Holy Sacraments*. To say no more, what think we of the *trine Immersion* once accounted a Pious Usage in the Church, whereby the Person being thrice dipt or put under Water, at the mention of each Person of the *Trinity*, was supposed to be baptized in the Belief of that great Article, So *Tertulian* expresseth it, † *Nam nec semel sed ter ad singula nomina, in Personas singulas tingimur. We are dipped not once but three times, at each name, and so are baptized into the three persons*. And besides this Signification of the *three Persons*, by this threefold Immersion, which *Tertulian* and not only he, but *St. Ambrose* have mentioned; there are others of the Fathers that have supposed the Death, the Burial, and the Resurrection of our Saviour, together with his being in the Grave three Days, was signified by this Custom.

And

* *Aug. de nupt. & concup. lib. 2. 29.*

† *Advers. Praxeam. Again in lib. de Coron. milit.*

And yet was this so far from being accounted any Sacrament of it self, or a Sacrament within that of Baptism, that the Church hath thought fit to lay *Immersion* aside, for the generality; and the *threefold Immersion* much sooner, particularly in *Spain*, and that upon a reason that made the *single dipping* as significant as the *Trine* had been when it was in use, viz, to distinguish themselves from the *Arrians*, who had taken occasion from this *threefold dipping* in Baptism, to assert the three distinct Substances, pretending a Testimony from the *Catholick Church* by this Usage. Much such a reason (by the way) the Reformed Churches in *Poland* govern'd themselves by, when in a general Synod they decreed against the Posture of sitting at the Lord's Supper, because that † *Custom had been brought in first by the Arrians, who as they irreverently treat Christ, so also his sacred appointments.* Which leads to a view of the Church in all its later Reformations.

2. Is it not very evident, that in none of our later Reformations, nay, even in those of our *Dissenting Brethren* themselves, but they do in their most Religious Solemnities, some things that are very Symbolical; Actions that have great Significations in them?

1. There giving to every baptized Infant a new Name, which both they and we do call the *Christian Name*; this seems to betoken our *being made new Creatures*, and *entred into a new state or condition of Life*, which still they seem to aim more expressly at, in their general Care to give the Child some Scripture Name, or some Name that should signifie some excellent Virtue or Grace, some Religious Duty owing to God, or some memorable Benefit received from him. Here we have an *outward visible Sign*, and this too sometimes of an *inward spiritual Grace*, and yet this no more accounted a *new Sacrament*, or a Sacrament within that of Baptism, then we do
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† Synod. Petricov. An. 1578.

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our *sign of the Cross*; and indeed, there seems just as much Reason for the one as for the other, and no more.

2. Those Arguments which some of our *Dissenting Brethren* have used in Plea for the posture of *sitting at the Lord's Supper*, do shew, that besides what they urge from the Posture wherein our Saviour himself celebrated it, they apprehend some *significancy* in the Gesture, that renders it more accomodate to that Ordinance than any other; for some of them plead for the Posture of *sitting*, as being most properly a *Table-Gesture*, and doth best of all express our *Fellowship with Christ, and the honour and privilege of Communion with him as Co-heirs*. Now, in this matter let us consider; our Lord hath no where expressly commanded us to perform this Sacrament in a *Sitting Posture*; much less hath he told us, that he ordained *this Gesture* in token of our *fellowship with him*; so that we see this *Gesture of sitting* (by the Tenor of their Argument) made an *outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual Grace*; and this, not from any antecedent express institution of Christ; which notwithstanding, this *posture of sitting* is not accounted by those that frame the Argument, any New or Additional Sacrament to that of the Lord's Supper.

3. Lastly, Those of the Congregational way, have a Formal Covenant, which they insist upon, that whoever will be admitted into any of their Churches, must engage themselves in; this is of that importance amongst them, that they call it, the *Constitutive Form of a Church*, that which makes any particular person Member of a Church. Yea, and (as * another expresses it) that *wherein the Union of such a Church doth consist*. We will suppose then, *this Covenant* administered in some Form or other, and the Person ad-
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* *Apol. for Church-coven.*

mitted by this Covenant into an *Independent Church*, declaring his Consent by some Action or other, such as *holding up his Hand*, or the like. Let me ask them; What must they of *that Church* think of this Rite or Ceremony of holding up the Hand? Will they not look upon it as a *Token* of his Consent to be a Church-Member? Here then is an *outward visible Sign*, of what? of no less (according to their apprehension of things) than a perfect *new state and condition of Life*; that is, of being embodied in Christ's Church, engaged to all the Duties, and enstated in all the Privileges of it. Will they say that this way of admission, either the Form of Words wherein their Covenant is administered, or the Ceremony of *holding up the Hand*, by which this Covenant is taken and assented to, was originally ordained by Christ? Or do they themselves esteem this of the Nature of the Sacrament? Or did the *Presbyterian Brethren*, in all their Arguments against this way, charge *them* with introducing a *new Sacrament*? So that from all Instances imaginable, both of the Jewish and Christian Church, and that both Primitive and Later Reformation; even from the particular Practices of our Dissenting Brethren, it is very evident, how unreasonable a thing it is, that though we sign the baptized Person with the *sign of the Cross*, in token that *hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified*, &c. we should be accused as introducing a new Sacrament, or adding the Sacrament of the Cross to that of Baptism.

But then, they tell us, secondly, we seem to own it our selves, when in an entire Representative of our Church (such as we suppose a Convocation to be) it is actually determined, that by the Sign of the Cross the Person baptized is *dedicated to the service of him that died upon the Cross*: And what can be more immediate (saith one of our Brethren) *than in the present dedicating act to use the Sign, and express the dedicating Signification?*

It is confest, that the 30th Canon doth say, *the Cross is an honourable Badge, whereby the Infant is dedicated, &c.* And the stress of the Objection in this part of it lyeth in the word *dedicated*, that is, because the Sacrament of Baptism is it self a Seal of Admision into Covenant, and *Dedication* to God, and the Christian Religion; therefore, by using a Symbolical Ceremony of human Institution, whereby we profess the Person baptized *dedicated to the service of him that dyed upon the Cross*, we have made a new Sacrament, and added to that of Baptism, to *dedicate* him in our own invented way, as Christ hath in that which he hath *instituted*.

1. To this I answer, that surely the word *Dedication* is of a much larger Signification, than that it should be confined meerly to the Interpretation that our Brethren would put upon it. The meaning of *Dedication* properly is, *the appropriating of any thing or person to any peculiar service*, such as a Church or Temple for the Worship of God; any Person to the Profession of the true Religion, to the Ministry, or to any kind of Attendance at the Holy Altars. This is the strictest Sense of *Dedication*; but then, in a larger Sense we may suppose it applied to any strict or conscientious Discharge of all the Duties, and answering all the Ends of the *first Dedication*. Thus, suppose a Man ordain'd to the Ministry, whereby he is properly *dedicated* to the Work and Service of the Gospel, he may, by some solemn Act of his own, *dedicate* himself to a zealous and faithful Discharge of that *Office*; and this, after some time that he may have apprehended himself hitherto not so diligent in the Trust that had been committed to him. This cannot be called in any Sense a new Ordination, but it may with Reason and Sense enough be stiled a dedicating of a Man's self more particularly to the service of God, in the discharge of that Ministry he was ordained to. And therefore,

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2. In this Sense the Convocation ought in all Justice to be understood, when they, in explaining the Intention of the Cross, tell us, *It is an honourable Badge, whereby the Infant is dedicated to the service of him that dyed upon the Cross, &c.*

And yet, I must needs say, it seems hard measure upon the Church of *England*, that if those in a Convocation should not have applied the word *Dedication* to what might be more strictly the Sense of it, that this should be so severely expounded, that no other Declarations of their meaning and intention must be accepted of, than what meerly the strict and critical Sense of that word will bear. Surely there are many Expressions in the Fathers, that may seem more distant from that Sense we are willing to take them in; and we should be very loth to yield them up as the Authors or Defenders of some dangerous Opinions in the Church of *Rome*, because some Phrases of theirs, in the rigour of them, may be prest to a kind of Meaning, that may seem to favour them. There is a necessary Allowance to be given to some schemes of Speech, and meaning of Words, or else we should be in a perpetual wrangle and dispute about them.

However, there doth not need even this sort of Charity for this word *dedicated*, upon which such weight of Argument hath been laid: For, as in all Authors it hath been variously used, so is it properly enough applied in this Canon, for the design for which it was used: And the Declaration is plain and intelligible enough to the candid and unprejudiced Mind. The word *Dedication* (as they use it) may properly enough signifie a *Confirmation* of our first *Dedication* to God in Baptism, and a Declaration of what the Church thinks of the Person baptized, what she doth expect from him, and what Obligations he lieth under by his Baptism. And as a *medium* of this Declaration, the Sign of the Cross is made, be-
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ing as expressive as so many words, what the Infant by his Baptism was designed to; the Apostle himself having comprehended the *whole of Christianity* under that Term and Denomination of the Cross. Now, that our Church did design this *declarative Dedication*, (by the use of this Sign) and none other, is very evident in that, though the word *dedicated* is used in the Explication of their Sense in that Canon, yet do they there refer to the Words used in the *Book of Common Prayer*. By comparing therefore the Canon and the Office for Baptism together (the Canon directing to the Office, and the Rubrick belonging to the Office directing to the Canon) we may observe what stress is to be laid upon the word *dedicated*, that is, how far they were from designing the same sort of *immediate Dedication* that is made by Baptism, and yet how by the Cross, we may properly enough be said to be *dedicated* too.

As to the Sacrament of Baptism, we are all agreed, that by *that* we are *dedicated* to the Service of Christ, and the Profession of his Gospel: Now the Church of *England*, both in the *Rubrick* and *Canon* do affirm and own, that the Baptism is compleat, and the Child made a Member of Christ's Church, before the Sign of the Cross is made use of; or if upon occasion it should not be made use of at all: It is expressly said, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, and upon that, *do sign it with the Cross*; So that the Child is declared *within the Congregation of Christ's Flock*, before the Sign of the Cross be applied to it: Beside, that *in the Office for private Baptism*, where the Sign of the Cross is to be omitted, we are directed, *not to doubt, but that the Child so baptized, is lawfully and sufficiently baptized*, the Canon confirming it, *that the Infant baptized is, by vertue of Baptism, before it be signed with the Sign of the Cross, receiv'd into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, as a perfect Member thereof, and not by any power ascribed unto the Sign of the Cross.* If

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If therefore we be dedicated in Baptism, and the Baptism acknowledg'd compleat and perfect, before or without the use of this Sign, the Church cannot be suppos'd ordaining so needless a Repetition as this would be, to *dedicate* in Baptism, and then to *dedicate* by the Cross again; but that which they express by *dedicated by the Cross*, must be something very distinct from that *Dedication* which is in Baptism; that is, the one is a Sign of *Dedication*, the other is the *Dedication* it self, as distinct the one from the other, as the Sign of Admission is from Admission it self, and a signification of a Privilege is from an instituted means of Grace. It seems a thing decent and seasonable enough, that when it hath pleased God to receive a Person into his Favour, and given him the Seal of it, that the Church should give him the right hand of Fellowship, solemnly declaring and testifying, he is received into her Communion, by giving him the Badge of our Common Religion. So that this is plainly no other than a Declaration the Church makes of what the Person baptized is admitted to, what Engagement he lyes under, when capable of making a visible Profession: It expresseth what hath been done in Baptism, which is indeed not a Sign of *Dedication*, but *Dedication* it self, (as I have already said) as also the Cross is not *Dedication* it self, but a *Sign* of it. Which Declaration is therefore made in the name of the Church in the plural Number, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, and do sign him with the Sign of the Cross, &c.* Whereas in Baptism the Minister, as the immediate Agent of Christ, by whom he is authorized and commissioned, in the singular Number (as in his Name) pronounceth it, *I baptize thee in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

As to what is urg'd above, That nothing can be more immediate, than in the present dedicating Act, to use the Sign, and express the dedicating Signification; they

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must know it might have been *more immediate*, either to have placed this Sign before Baptism, or to have appointed some such Form of Words, in applying it as the Church of *Rome* doth ; or if it had been pretended to be of Divine Institution, and necessary to make the Sacrament of Baptism compleat and perfect.

And thus, I presume, I have run through the main Debate betwixt us and our *Dissenting Brethren* as to this Case, wherein, I hope, I have neither misrepresented their Objections, nor let pass any material Strength in them, nor in replying to them, used any one provoking or offensive Word. Would they but read and weigh this and the other Discourses of this kind, with the same calmness of Temper and study of mutual Agreement, wherewith (I dare say) they have been written, I cannot think there would abide upon their Spirits so vehement a desire for the removal of these things, but it might rather issue in a peaceable and happy Closure in the use of what hath been made appear was so innocently taken up, and might with so much Advantage, under the encouragement of serious and good Men, be still retained. I do not indeed think any of our Church so fond of this Ceremony particularly, but that, if the laying it aside might turn to as great Edification in the Church, as the serious Use of it might be improv'd to, our Governours would easily enough condescend to such an Overture. Instances of this have been given in our Age ; and our *Presbyterian Brethren* in their Address to the Bishops do own, * *That divers Reverend Bishops and Doctors, in a Paper in Print, before these unhappy Wars began, yielded to the laying aside of the Cross, and making many material Alterations, &c.* They have not those Apprehensions of these things, that

* *Except. & Pap. of the Presbyt.* p. 31.

that they are unalterable, and obligatory upon all Christians, as such ; or, that the laying them aside, for the bringing about some greater Good, would be offensive to God. I would to God our Brethren, at least would but meet us thus far, as to throw off those *Superstitious* Prejudices they may have conceived against them, and think, that as the laying them aside would not be displeasing to God, so the use of them cannot be so neither. Forgive the expression of *Superstitious Prejudices* : For I must suppose we put too high a value upon *indifferent Rites*, when we think that either the Use or Rejection of them will recommend us to God, unless there be other accidents of Obedience or Disobedience to Authority, that will alter the Case ; otherwise the Imagination we may have of pleasing or displeasing God in any of these things, must look like what the *Greeks* express *Superstition* by * I mean, a *causeless dread of God*. It is a Passage in *Calvin*, that it is *equally superstitious to condemn things indifferent as unholy, and to command them as if they were holy* †. It is infinitely a nobler Conquest over our selves, a proper regaining that *Christian Liberty* to which we are redeemed, and would be of far happier Consequence to the Church of God, to possess our selves with such Notions of God, and of indifferent things, as to believe we cannot recommend our selves to him in the least measure, by scrupling what he hath interpos'd no Command to make them either Obligatory or Unlawful.

* *Δεισιμασία.*

† *In 2 Precept.*

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Holy Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER.

MY design in this Argument, is from the Consideration of the Nature of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and of the perpetual Use of it to the End of the World, to awaken Men to a Sense of their Duty, and the great Obligation which lies upon them to the more frequent receiving of it. And there is the greater need to make Men sensible of their Duty in this particular, because in this last Age by the unwary Discourses of some, concerning the Nature of this Sacrament, and the danger of receiving it unworthily, such Doubts and Fears have been raised in the Minds of Men, as utterly to deter many, and in a great measure to discourage almost the generality of Christians from the use of it, to the great prejudice and danger of Men's Souls, and the visible abatement of Piety by the gross neglect of so excellent a Means of our growth and improvement in it; and to the mighty scandal of our Religion, by the

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the general difuse and contempt of so plain and solemn Institution of our Blessed Lord and Saviour.

Therefore I shall take occasion as briefly and clearly as I can to treat of these four Points.

First, Of the Perpetuity of this Institution ; this the Apostle signifies when he saith, that by eating this Bread, and drinking this Cup, we do shew the Lord's Death till he come, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Secondly, Of the Obligation that lies upon all Christians to a frequent Observance of this Institution ; this is signified in that Expression of the Apostle, As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup : Which Expression considered and compared together with the Practice of the Primitive Church, does imply an Obligation upon Christians to the frequent receiving of this Sacrament.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to satisfy the Objections and Scruples which have been raised in the Minds of Men, and particularly of many devout and sincere Christians, to their great Discouragement from their receiving this Sacrament, at least so frequently as they ought : Which Objections are chiefly grounded upon what the Apostle says, Wherefore whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord ; and doth eat and drink damnation to himself, 1 Cor. 11. 27, 29.

Fourthly, What Preparation of our selves is necessary in order to our worthy receiving of this Sacrament : which will give me occasion to explain the Apostle's meaning in those Words, But let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup, 1 Cor. 11. 28.

I. For the *Perpetuity* of this Institution, implied in those Words, *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's Death till he come ;* or the words may be read *imparatively* and by way

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way of Precept, *shew ye forth the Lord's Death till he come.* In the three Verses immediately before, the Apostle particularly declares the Institution of this Sacrament, with the manner and Circumstances of it, as he had received it not only by the hands of the Apostles, but as the words seem rather to intimate, by immediate Revelation from our Lord himself, *ver. 23. For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you: that the Lord Jesus in the same night that he was betrayed took Bread, and when he had given Thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the Cup when he had supped, saying, this Cup is the New Testament in my Blood; this do as often as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me.* So that the Institution is in these Words, *this do in remembrance of me.* In which words our Lord commands his Disciples after his Death to repeat these Actions of *taking, and breaking, and eating the Bread, and of drinking of the Cup,* by way of solemn Commemoration of him. Now whether this was to be done by them once only, or oftner; and whether by the Disciples only, during their Lives, or by all Christians afterwards in all successive Ages of the Church, is not so certain meerly from the force of these Words, *do this in remembrance of me:* But what the Apostle adds, puts the matter out of all doubt, that the Institution of this Sacrament was intended for all Ages of the Christian Church; *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come:* that is, until the time of his second coming, which will be at the end of the World. So that this Sacrament was designed to be a standing Commemoration of the Death and Passion of our Lord till he should come to Judgment; and consequently the Obligation that lies upon Christians to the observation of it is perpetual, and shall never cease to the end of the World.

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So that it is a vain conceit and meer dream of the *Enthusiasts* concerning the *seculum Spiritus Sancti*, the Age and Dispensation of the *Holy Ghost*, when, as they suppose, all humane Teaching shall cease, and all external Ordinances and Institutions in Religion shall vanish, and there shall be no further Use of them. Whereas it is very plain from the New Testament, that Prayer and outward Teaching, and the Use of the two Sacraments, were intended to continue among Christians in all Ages. As for Prayer, (besides our natural Obligation to this Duty, if there were no revealed Religion) we are by our Saviour particularly exhorted to *watch and pray*, with regard to the day of Judgment, and in consideration of the uncertainty of the Time when it shall be : And therefore this will always be a Duty incumbent upon Christians till the Day of Judgment, because it is prescribed as one of the best ways of Preparation for it. That outward Teaching likewise and *Baptism*, were intended to be perpetual is no less plain, because Christ hath expressly promised to be with the Teachers of his Church in the Use of these Ordinances to the end of the World, *Matth. 28. 19, 20. Go and disciple all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : and lo I am with you always to the end of the World.* Not only to the end of that particular Age, but to the end of the Gospel Age, and the consummation of all Ages, as the Phrase clearly imports. And it is as plain from this *Text*, that the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* was intended for a perpetual Institution in the Christian Church, till the second coming of Christ, *viz.* his coming to Judgment : Because *St. Paul* tells us, that by these Sacramental Signs the Death of Christ is to be represented and commemorated till he comes, *Do this in remembrance of me : For as oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come.*

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And if this be the End and Use of this Sacrament, to be a solemn Remembrance of the Death and Sufferings of our Lord during his absence from us, that is till his coming to Judgment, then this Sacrament will never be out of date till the second coming of our Lord ; the consideration whereof should mightily strengthen and encourage our Faith in the hope of Eternal Life so often as we partake of this Sacrament ; since our Lord hath left it to us as a memorial of himself till he come to translate his Church into Heaven, and as a sure pledge that he will come again at the end of the World, and invest us in that Glory which he is now gone before to prepare for us. So that as often as we approach the Table of the Lord, we should comfort our selves with the Thoughts of that blessed Time when we shall eat and drink with him in his Kingdom, and shall be admitted to the great Feast of the Lamb, and to eternal Communion with God, the Judge of all, and with our Blessed and Glorified Redeemer, and the Holy Angels and the Spirits of just Men made perfect.

And the same Consideration should likewise make us afraid to receive this Sacrament unworthily, without due Preparation for it, and without worthy Effects of it upon your Hearts and Lives ; because of that dreadful Sentence of Condemnation which at the Second coming of our Lord shall be past upon those, who by the Profanation of this solemn Institution trample under Foot the Son of God, and contemn the Blood of the Covenant ; that Covenant of Grace and Mercy which God hath ratified with Mankind by the Blood of his Son. The Apostle tells us, *that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord, and eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself.* This indeed is spoken of temporal Judgment (as I shall shew in the latter part of this Discourse,) but the Apostle likewise

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wife supposeth, that if these temporal Judgments had not their Effect to bring Men to Repentance, but they still persisted in the Profanation of this Holy Sacrament, they should at last be condemned with the World. For as he that partaketh worthily of this Sacrament, confirms his Interest in the Promises of the Gospel, and his Title to Eternal Life ; so he that receives this Sacrament unworthily, that is without due Reverence, and without Fruits meet for it ; nay, on the contrary continues to live in Sin whilst he commemorates the Death of Christ, *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, this Man aggravates and seals his own Damnation, because he is guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ, not only by the contempt of it, but by renewing in some sort the Cause of his Sufferings, and as it were, *crucifying to himself afresh the Lord of Life and Glory, and putting him to an open shame*. And when the Great Judge of the World shall appear and pass final Sentence upon Men, such obstinate and impenitent Wretches as could not be wrought upon by the Remembrance of the dearest Love of their dying Lord, nor be engaged to leave their Sins by all the Tyes and Obligations of this Holy Sacrament, shall have their Portion with *Pilate and Judas*, with the *chief Priests and Soldiers*, who were the Betrayers and Murtherers of the Lord of Life and Glory ; and shall be dealt withal as those who are in some sort guilty of the *Body and Blood of the Lord*. Which severe Threatening ought not to discourage Men from the Sacrament, but to deter all those from their Sins who think of engaging themselves to God by so solemn and holy a Covenant. It is by no means a sufficient Reason to make Men to fly from the Sacrament, but certainly one of the most powerful Arguments in the World to make Men forsake their Sins ; as I shall shew more fully under the Third Head of this Discourse.

II. The

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II. The *Obligation* that lies upon all Christians to the frequent Observance and Practice of this Institution. For though it be not necessarily implied in these Words, *as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this Cup*; yet if we compare these Words of the Apostle with the Usage and Practice of Christians at that Time, which was to Communicate in this Holy Sacrament so often as they solemnly met together to Worship God, they plainly suppose and recommend to us the frequent Use of this Sacrament, or rather imply an Obligation upon Christians to embrace all Opportunities of receiving it. For the Sense and Meaning of any Law or Institution is best understood by the general Practice which follows immediately upon it.

And to convince Men of their Obligation hereunto, and to engage them to a suitable Practice, I shall now endeavour with all the Plainness and Force of Perswasion I can; and so much the more, because the neglect of it among Christians is grown so general, and a great many Persons from a superstitious Awe and Reverence of this Sacrament are by degrees fallen into a profane Neglect and Contempt of it.

I shall briefly mention a threefold Obligation lying upon all Christians to frequent Communion in this Holy Sacrament; each of them sufficient of it self, but all of them together of the greatest Force imaginable to engage us hereunto.

I. We are obliged in point of indispensable Duty, and in Obedience to a plain Precept and most solemn Institution of our Blessed Saviour, that great *Lawgiver*, who is able to save and to destroy, as St. James calls him: He hath bid us do this. And St. Paul, who declares nothing in this matter but what he tells us he *received from the Lord*, admonisheth us to do it often. Now for any Man that professeth himself a Christian to live in the open and continued Contempt

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tempt or Neglect of a plain Law and Institution of Christ, is utterly inconsistent with such a Profession. To such our Lord may say as he did to the *Jews*, *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* How far the Ignorance of this Institution, or the Mistakes which Men have been led into about it, may extenuate this Neglect, is another Consideration. But after we know our Lord's Will in this particular, and have the Law plainly laid before us, there is no Cloak for our Sin. For nothing can excuse the wilful neglect of a plain Institution, from a downright contempt of our Saviour's Authority.

2. We are likewise obliged hereunto in point of *Interest*. The Benefits which we expect to be derived and assured to us by this Sacrament are all the Blessings of the New Covenant, the Forgiveness of our Sins, the Grace and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, to enable us to perform the Conditions of this Covenant required on our Part; and the Comforts of God's Holy Spirit to encourage us in Well-doing, and to support us under Sufferings; and the glorious Reward of Eternal Life. So that in neglecting this Sacrament we neglect our own Interest and Happiness, we forsake our own Mercies, and judge our selves unworthy of all the Blessings of the Gospel, and deprive our selves of one of the best Means and Advantages of confirming and conveying these Blessings to us. So that if we had not a due Sense of our *Duty*, the Consideration of our own *Interest* should oblige us not to neglect so excellent and so effectual a Means of promoting our own Comfort and Happiness.

3. We are likewise particularly obliged, in point of *Gratitude*, to the careful Observance of this Institution. This was the particular Thing our Lord gave in charge, when he was going to lay down his Life for us, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Men
use

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use religiously to observe the Charge of a dying Friend, unless it be very difficult and unreasonable, to do what he desires: But this is the Charge of our best Friend (nay of the greatest Friend and Benefactor of all Mankind) when he was preparing himself to dye in our stead, and to offer up himself a Sacrifice for us; to undergo the most grievous Pains and Sufferings for our sakes, and to yield up himself to the worst of Temporal Deaths, that he might deliver us from the bitter Pains of Eternal Death. And can we deny him any thing he asks of us, who was going to do all this for us? Had such a Friend, and in such Circumstances, bid us do some great thing, would we not have done it? how much more, when he hath only said, *Do this in Remembrance of me*; when he hath only commended to us one of the most natural and delightful Actions, as a fit Representation and Memorial of his wonderful Love to us, and of his cruel Sufferings for our Sakes; when he has only enjoined us, in a thankful Commemoration of his Goodness, to meet at his Table, and to remember what he hath done for us; to look upon him whom we have pierced, and to resolve to grieve and wound him no more? Can we, without the most horrible Ingratitude, neglect this dying Charge of our Sovereign and our Saviour, the great Friend and Lover of Souls? A Command so reasonable, so easie, so full of Blessings and Benefits to the Faithful Observers of it!

One would think it were no difficult matter to convince Men of their Duty in this particular, and of the necessity of observing so plain an Institution of our Lord; that it were no hard thing to persuade Men to their Interest, and to be willing to partake of those great and manifold Blessings which all Christians believe to be promised and made good to the frequent and worthy Receivers of this Sacrament. Where then lies the Difficulty? What should be the

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cause of all this Backwardness which we see in Men to so plain, so necessary, and so beneficial a Duty ? The truth is, Men have been greatly discouraged from this Sacrament, by the unwary pressing and inculcating of two great Truths ; *the danger of the unworthy receiving of this holy Sacrament, and the necessity of a due Preparation for it.* Which brings me to the

III. *Third Particular* I proposed, which was to endeavour to satisfy the *Objections* and *Scruples* which have been raised in the Minds of Men, and particularly of many devout and sincere Christians, to their great discouragement from the receiving of this Sacrament, at least so frequently as they ought. And these Objection I told you are chiefly grounded upon what the Apostle says at the 27th Verse ; *Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this Bread and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* And again, ver. 29. *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.* Upon the Mistake and Misapplication of these Texts have been grounded two Objections, of great force to discourage Men from this Sacrament, which I shall endeavour with all the Tenderness and Clearness I can to remove. *First*, That the danger of unworthy receiving being so very great, it seems the safest way not to receive at all. *Secondly*, That so much Preparation and Worthiness being required, in order to our Receiving, the more timorous sort of devout Christians can never think themselves duly enough qualified for so sacred an Action.

Object. I. 1. That the danger of unworthy Receiving being so very great, it seems the safest way wholly to refrain from this Sacrament, and not to receive it at all. But this Objection is evidently of no force, if there be (as most certainly there is) as great, or a greater danger on the other hand, viz. in the neglect

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leſt of this Duty: And ſo, tho' the danger of unworthy Receiving, be avoided by not receiving, yet the danger of neglecting and contemning a plain Inſtitution of Chriſt is not thereby avoided. Surely they in the Parable that reſuſed to come to the *Marriage-feaſt* of the *King's Son*, and made light of that gracious Invitation, were at leaſt as faulty as he who came *without a Wedding-garment*. And we find in the concluſion of the *Parable*, that as he was ſeverely puniſhed for his Diſreſpect, ſo they were deſtroyed for their Diſobedience. Nay, of the two, it is the greater Sign of Contempt wholly to neglect the Sacrament, than to partake of it without ſome due Qualification. The greateſt Indispoſition that can be for this Holy Sacrament, is ones being a bad Man, and he may be as bad, and is more likely to continue ſo, who wilfully neglects this Sacrament, than he that comes to it with any degree of Reverence and Preparation, though much leſs than he ought: And ſurely it is very hard for Men to come to ſo ſolemn an Ordinance without ſome kind of religious Awe upon their Spirits, and without ſome good Thoughts and Reſolutions, at leaſt for the preſent. If a Man that lives in any known Wickedneſs of Life, do before he receive the Sacrament, ſet himſelf ſeriously to be humbled for his Sins, and to repent of them, and to beg God's Grace and Aſſiſtance againſt them; and after the receiving it, does continue for ſome time in theſe good Reſolutions, though after a while he may poſſibly relapſe into the ſame Sins again; this is ſome kind of a Reſtraint to a wicked Life; and theſe good Moods and Fits of Repentance and Reformation are much better than a conſtant and uninterrupted Courſe of Sin: Even this *Righteouſneſs*, which is but as the morning cloud, and the early dew which ſo ſoon paſſeth away, is better than none.

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And indeed, scarce any Man can think of coming to the Sacrament, but he will by this Consideration be excited to some good Purposes, and put upon some sort of endeavour to mend and reform his Life; and though he be very much under the Bondage and Power of evil Habits, if he do with any competent degree of Sincerity (and it is his own fault if he do not) make use of this excellent Means and Instrument for the mortifying and subduing of his Lusts, and for the obtaining of God's Grace and Assistance, it may please God, by the Use of these Means so to abate the Force and Power of his Lusts, and to imprint such Considerations upon his Mind in the receiving of this Holy Sacrament, and preparing himself for it, that he may at last break of his wicked Course, and become a good Man.

But, on the other hand, as to those who neglect this Sacrament, there is hardly any thing left to restrain them from the greatest Enormities of Life, and to give a check to them in their evil Course; nothing but the Penalty of Humane Laws, which Men may avoid, and yet be wicked enough. Heretofore Men used to be restrained from great and scandalous Vices, by Shame and Fear of Disgrace, and would abstain from many Sins, out of regard to their Honour and Reputation among Men: But Men have hardned their Faces in this degenerate Age, and those gentle Restraints of Modesty, which govern'd and kept Men in order heretofore, signify nothing now a-days. Blushing is out of Fashion, and shame is ceased from among the Children of Men.

But the Sacrament did always use to lay some kind of Restraint upon the worst of Men; and if it did not wholly reform them, it would at least have some good Effect upon them for a time: If it did not make Men Good, yet it would make them resolve to be so, and leave some good Thoughts, and Impressions upon their Minds.

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So that I doubt not but it hath been a thing of very bad consequence, to discourage Men so much from the Sacrament, as the way hath been of late Years: And that many Men who were under some kind of check before, since they have been driven away from the Sacrament, have quite let loose the Reins, and prostituted themselves to all manner of Impiety and Vice. And among the many ill Effects of our past Confusions, this is none of the least, That in many Congregations of this Kingdom, Christians were generally disused and deterred from the Sacrament, upon a Pretence that they were unfit for it; and being so, they must necessarily incur the danger of unworthy Receiving; and therefore they had better wholly to abstain from it. By which it came to pass, that in very many Places this great and solemn Institution of the Christian Religion was almost quite forgotten, as if it had been no part of it, and the remembrance of Christ's Death even lost among Christians: So that many Congregations in *England* might justly have taken up the Complaint of the Woman at our Saviour's Sepulchre, *They have taken away our Lord, and we know not where they have laid him.*

But surely Men did not well consider what they did, nor what the Consequences of it would be, when they did so earnestly dissuade Men from the Sacrament. 'Tis true indeed, the danger of unworthy Receiving is great, but the proper Inference and Conclusion from hence is not, that Men should upon this Consideration be deterred from the Sacrament, but that they should be affrighted from their Sins, and from that wicked Course of Life, which is an habitual Indisposition and Unworthiness. *St. Paul* indeed (as I observed before) truly represents, and very much aggravates the Danger of the unworthy Receiving of this Sacrament, but he did not deter the *Corinthians* from it, because they had some-

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times come to it without due Reverence, but exhort^s them to amend what had been amiss, and to come better prepared and disposed for the future. And therefore, after that terrible Declaration in the Text, *Whosoever shall eat this Bread and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* He does not add, Therefore, let Christians take heed of coming to the Sacrament, but, let them come prepared and with due Reverence, not as to a common Meal, but to a solemn Participation of the Body and Blood of Christ; *but let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

For if this be a good Reason to abstain from the Sacrament, for fear of performing so sacred an Action in an undue manner, it were best for a bad Man to lay aside all Religion, and to give over the Exercise of all the Duties of Piety, of Prayer, of Reading and Hearing the Word of God, because there is a proportionable Danger in the unworthy and unprofitable Use of any of these. *The Prayer of the wicked* (that is, of one that resolves to continue so) *is an abomination to the Lord.* And our Saviour gives us the same Caution concerning the hearing the Word of God; *Take heed how ye hear.* And St. Paul tells us, that those who are not reformed by the Doctrine of the Gospel, it is *the savour of Death*, that is deadly and damnable to such Persons.

But now, will any Man from hence argue, that it is best for a wicked Man not to pray, not to hear or read the Word of God, lest by so doing he should endanger and aggravate his Condemnation? And yet there is as much reason from this Consideration, to perswade Men to give over praying and attending to God's Word, as to lay aside the Use of the Sacrament. And it is every whit as true, that he that prays unworthily, that is, without Fruit and Benefit, is guilty of a great Contempt of

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God, and of our Blessed Saviour ; and by his devout Prayers, and unfruitful hearing of God's Word, does further and aggravate his own Damnation : I say, this is every whit as true, as that he that eats and drinks the Sacrament unworthily is guilty of a high Contempt of Christ, and *eats and drinks his own Judgment* ; so that the danger of the unworthy performing this so sacred an Action is no otherwise a reason to any Man to abstain from the Sacrament, than it is an Argument to him to cast off all Religion. He that unworthily useth or performs any part of Religion is in an evil and dangerous Condition, but he that casts off all Religion, plungeth himself into a most desperate State, and does certainly damn himself to avoid the danger of Damnation ; because he that casts off all Religion, throws off all the Means whereby he should be reclaimed and brought into a better State. I cannot more fitly illustrate this matter, than by this plain Similitude : He that eats and drinks intemperately endangers his Health and his Life ; but he that to avoid this danger will not eat at all, I need not tell you what will certainly become of him in a very short space.

There are some conscientious Persons who abstain from the Sacrament upon an apprehension that the Sins which they shall commit afterwards are unpardonable. But this is a great mistake ; our Saviour having so plainly declared, that all manner of Sin shall be forgiven Men, except the Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, such as was that of the *Pharisees*, who as our Saviour tells us, blasphemed the Holy Ghost, in ascribing those great Miracles which they saw him work, and which he really wrought by the Spirit of God, to the Power of the Devil. Indeed to sin deliberately after so solemn an Engagement to the contrary, is a great Aggravation of Sin, but not such as to make it unpardonable. But the neglect of the Sacrament is not the way to prevent these Sins ; but,

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on the contrary, the constant receiving of it with the best Preparation we can, is one of the most effectual Means to prevent Sin for the future, and to obtain the Assistance of God's Grace to that End : And if we fall into Sin afterwards, we may be renewed by Repentance ; *For we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who is the Propitiation for our Sins* ; and as such, is in a very lively and affecting manner exhibited to us in this blessed Sacrament of his Body broken, and his Blood shed for the Remission of our Sins. Can we think that the Primitive Christians, who so frequently received this Holy Sacrament, did never after the receiving of it fall into any deliberate Sin ? Undoubtedly many of them did, but far be it from us, to think that such Sins were unpardonable, and that so many good Men should, because of their careful and conscientious Observance of our Lord's Institution, unavoidably fall into Condemnation.

To draw to a Conclusion ; Such groundless Fears and Jealousies as these may be a Sign of a good Meaning, but they are certainly a Sign of an injudicious Mind ; for if we stand upon these Scruples, no Man perhaps was ever so worthily prepared to draw near to God in any Duty of Religion, but there was still some defect or other in the Disposition of his Mind, and the Degree of his Preparation. But if we prepare our selves as well as we can, this is all God expects. And for our Fears of falling into Sin afterwards, there is this plain Answer to be given to it ; that the danger of *falling into Sin* is not prevented by neglecting the Sacrament, but increased, because a powerful and probable Means of preserving Men from Sin is neglected. And why should not every sincere Christian, by the receiving of this Sacrament, and renewing his Covenant with God, rather hope to be confirmed in Goodness, and to receive farther Assistances of God's Grace and Holy

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Spirit, to strengthen him against Sin, and to enable him to subdue it, than trouble himself with Fears which are either without ground, or if they are not, are no sufficient Reason to keep any Man from the Sacrament? We cannot surely entertain so unworthy a Thought of God and our Blessed Saviour, as to imagine, that he did institute the Sacrament not for the furtherance of our Salvation, but as a Snare, and an occasion of our Ruin and Damnation. This were to pervert the gracious Design of God, and turn the Cup of Salvation into a Cup of deadly Poyson to the Souls of Men.

All then that can reasonably be inferred from the danger of unworthy Receiving is, that upon this Consideration Men should be quickened to come to the Sacrament with a due Preparation of Mind, and so much the more to fortifie their Resolutions of living suitably to that Holy Covenant which they solemnly renew every time they receive this Holy Sacrament. This Consideration ought to convince us of the absolute Necessity of a good Life, but not to deter us from the Use of any Means which may contribute to make us Good. Therefore (as a learned Divine says very well) this Sacrament can be neglected by none but those that do not understand it, but those who are unwilling to be tyed to their Duty, and are afraid of being engaged to use their best Diligence to keep the Commandments of Christ: And such Persons have no reason to fear being in a worse Condition, since they are already in so bad a State. And thus much may suffice for answer to the *first Objection*, concerning the great Danger of unworthy Receiving this Holy Sacrament. I proceed to the

2. *Second Objection*, which was this; That so much Preparation and Worthiness being required to our worthy Receiving, the more timorous sort of Christians

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rians can never think themselves duly enough qualified for so sacred an Action.

For a full Answer to this Objection, I shall endeavour briefly to clear these *three* things. *First*, That every Degree of Imperfection in our Preparation for this Sacrament, is not a sufficient Reason for Men to refrain from it. *Secondly*, That a total want of a due Preparation, not only in the Degree but in the Main and Substance of it, though it render us unfit at present to receive this Sacrament, yet it does by no means excuse our Neglect of it.

Thirdly, That the proper Inference and Conclusion from the total want of a due Preparation, is not to cast off all Thoughts of receiving the Sacrament, but immediately to set upon the Work of Preparation, that so we may be fit to receive it. And if I can clearly make out these three things, I hope this Objection is fully answered.

1. That every degree of Imperfection in our Preparation for this Sacrament, is not a sufficient Reason for Men to abstain from it : For then no Man should ever receive it ; For, who is every way worthy and in all Degrees and Respects duly qualified to approach the Presence of God in any of the Duties of his Worship and Service ? Who can *wash his Hands in Innocency*, that so he may be perfectly fit to approach God's Altar ? *There is not a Man on Earth that lives and sins not.* The Graces of the best Men are imperfect ; and every Imperfection in Grace and Goodness is an Imperfection in the Disposition and Preparation of our Minds for this Holy Sacrament : But if we do heartily repent of our Sins, and sincerely resolve to obey and perform the Terms of the Gospel, and of that Covenant which we enter'd into by Baptism, and are going solemnly to renew and confirm by our Receiving of this Sacrament, we are at least in some degree, and in the main, qualified to partake of this Holy Sacrament ; and the way for us to be more fit, is to
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receive this Sacrament frequently, that by this Spiritual Food of God's appointing, by *this living Bread which comes down from Heaven*, our Souls may be nourished in Goodness, and new Strength and Virtue may be continually derived to us, for the purifying of our Hearts, and enabling us to run the Ways of God's Commandment with more Constancy and Delight: For the way to grow in Grace, and to be strengthened with all might in the inner Man, and to abound in all the fruits of Righteousness, which by Christ Jesus are to the praise and glory of God, is with Care and Conscience to use those Means which God hath appointed for this End: And if we will neglect the Use of these Means, it is to no purpose for us to pray to God for his Grace and Assistance. We may tire our selves with our Devotions, and fill Heaven with vain Complaints, and yet by all this Importunity obtain nothing at God's hand: Like lazy Beggars that are always complaining and always asking, but will not work, will do nothing to help themselves and better their Condition; and therefore are never like to move the Pity and Compassion of others. If we expect God's Grace and Assistance, we must work out our own Salvation in the careful Use of all those Means which God hath appointed to that End. That excellent Degree of Goodness which Men would have to fit them for the Sacrament, is not to be had but by the Use of it. And therefore it is a preposterous thing for Men to insist upon having the End, before they will use the Means that may further them in the obtaining of it.

2. The total want of a due Preparation, not only in the Degree but in the Main and Substance of it, though it render us unfit at present to receive this Sacrament, yet does it by no means excuse our neglect of it. One Fault may draw another, but can never excuse it. It is our great Fault that we are wholly unprepared, and no Man can claim any Benefit by

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his Fault, or plead it in excuse or extenuation of it, a total want of Preparation and an absolute Unworthiness is Impenitency in an evil Course, a Resolution to continue a bad Man, not to quit his Lusts and to break off that wicked Course he hath lived in : But is this any excuse for the neglect of our Duty, that we will not fit our selves for the doing of it with Benefit and Advantage to our selves ? A Father commands his Son to ask him Blessing every Day, and is ready to give it him ; but so long as he is undutiful to him in his other Actions, and lives in open Disobedience, forbids him to come in his sight. He excuseth himself from asking his Father Blessing because he is undutiful in other things, and resolves to continue so. This is just the Case of neglecting the Duty God requires, and the Blessings he offers to us in this Sacrament, because we have made our selves incapable of so performing the one as to receive the other ; and are resolved to continue so. We will not do our Duty in other things, and then plead that we are unfit and unworthy to do it in this particular of the Sacrament.

3. The proper Inference and Conclusion from a total want of due Preparation for the Sacrament is not to cast off all Thoughts of receiving it, but immediately to set about the Work of Preparation, that so we may be fit to receive it. For if this be true, that they who are absolutely unprepared ought not to receive the Sacrament, nor can do it with any Benefit ; nay, by doing it in such a manner, render their Condition much worse, this is a most forcible Argument to Repentance and Amendment of Life : There is nothing reasonable in this Case but immediately to resolve upon a better Course, that so we maybe meet Partakers of those holy Mysteries, and may no longer provoke God's wrath against us by the wilful neglect of so great and necessary a Duty of the Christian Religion. And we do wilfully
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neglect it, so long as we do wilfully refuse to fit and qualifie ourselves for the due and worthy Performance of it. Let us view the thing in a like Case; A Pardon is graciously offered to a Rebel, he declines to accept it, and modestly excuseth himself because he is not worthy of it. And why is he not worthy? because he resolves to be a Rebel, and then his Pardon will do him no good, but be an aggravation of his Crime. Very true; and it will be no less an aggravation that he refuseth it for such a Reason, and under a pretence of Modesty does the impudentest thing in the World. This is just the Case; and in this Case there is but one thing reasonable to be done, and that is, for a Man to make himself capable of the Benefit as soon as he can, and thankfully to accept of it: But to excuse himself from accepting of the Benefit offered, because is not worthy of it, nor fit for it, nor ever intends to be so, is as if a Man should desire to be excused from being happy, because he is resolved to play the Fool and to be miserable. So that whether our want of Preparation be total, or only to some degree, it is every way unreasonable: If it be in the degree only, it ought not to hinder us from receiving the Sacrament; If it be total, it ought to put us immediately upon removing the Impediment, by making such Preparation as is necessary to the due and worthy receiving of it. And this brings me to the

IV. *Fourth and last thing I proposed, viz. What Preparation of our selves is necessary in order to the worthy receiving of this Sacrament. Which I told you would give me Occasion to explain the Apostle's meaning in the last Part of the Text, But let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* I think it very clear from the Occasion and Circumstances of the Apostle's Discourse concerning the Sacrament, that he does not intend the Examination

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tion of our State, whether we be Christians or not, and sincerely resolved to continue so; and consequently that he does not here speak of our Habitual Preparation by the Resolution of a good Life. This he takes for granted, that they were Christians, and resolved to continue and persevere in their Christian Profession: But he speaks of their actual Fitness and Worthiness at that time when they came to receive the Lord's Supper. And for the clearing of this Matter, we must consider what it was that gave occasion to this Discourse. At the 20th *Verse* of this Chapter he sharply reproves their irreverent and unsuitable Carriage at the Lord's Supper. They came to it very disorderly, *one before another*. It was the Custom of Christians to meet at their *Feast of Charity*, in which they did communicate with great Sobriety and Temperance; and when that was ended they celebrated the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Now among the *Corinthians* this order was broken: The Rich met and excluded the Poor from this Common Feast. And after an irregular Feast (one before another eating his own Supper as he came) they went to the Sacrament in great Disorder; *one was hungry* having eaten nothing at all, *other were drunk*, having eaten intemperately, and the Poor were despised and neglected. This the *Apostle* condemns as a great Profanation of that solemn Institution of the Sacrament; at the Participation whereof they behaved themselves with as little Reverence as if they had been met at common Supper or Feast. And this he calls *not discerning the Lord's Body*, making no difference in their Behaviour between the Sacrament and a Common Meal; which irreverent and contemptuous Carriage of theirs he calls *eating and drinking unworthily*; for which he pronounceth them *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, which were represented and commemorated in their *eating of that Bread, and drinking of that Cup*. By which irreverent and

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and contemptuous Usage of the Body and Blood of our Lord, he tells them that they did incur the Judgment of God; which he calls *eating and drinking their own Judgment*. For that the word *κρίσις*, which our Translators render *Damnation*, does not here signifie eternal Condemnation, but a temporal Judgment and Chastisement in order to the prevention of eternal Condemnation, is evident from what follows; *He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself*: And then he says, *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*: That is, for this Irreverence of theirs God had sent among them several Diseases, of which many had died. And then he adds, *For if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged*. If we would judge our selves; whether this be meant of the Publick Censures of the Church, or our private censuring of our selves in order to our future Amendment and Reformation, is not certain. If of the latter, which I think most probable, then *judging* here is much the same with *examining our selves*, *vers. 28*. And then the *Apostle's* meaning is, that if we would censure and examine our selves, so as to be more careful for the future, we should escape the Judgment of God in these temporal Punishments. *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World*. But when we are judged; that is, when by neglecting thus to judge our selves we provoke God to judge us; we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world; that is, he inflicts these temporal Judgments upon us to prevent our eternal Condemnation. Which plainly shews, that the Judgment here spoken of is not eternal Condemnation. And then he concludes, *Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat tarry for one another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto judgment*: Where the *Apostle* plainly shews, both what was the Crime
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of unworthy receiving, and the Punishment of it. Their Crime was, their irreverent and disorderly Participation of the Sacrament; and their Punishment was, those temporal Judgments which God inflicted upon them for this their Contempt of the Sacrament.

Now this being, I think, very plain, we are proportionably to understand the Precept of Examination of our selves *before we eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup. But let a man examine himself*; that is, consider well with himself what a sacred Action he is going about, and what Behaviour becomes him when he is celebrating this Sacrament instituted by our Lord in memorial of his Body and Blood, that is, of his Death and Passion: And if heretofore he have been guilty of any Disorder and Irreverence (such as the *Apostle* here taxeth them withal) let him censure and *judge himself* for it, be sensible of, and sorry for his Fault, and be careful to avoid it for the future; and having thus *examined himself, let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* This, I think, is the plain Sense of the *Apostle's* Discourse; and that if we attend to the Scope and Circumstances of it, it cannot well have any other meaning.

But some will say, Is this all the Preparation that is required to our worthy receiving of the Sacrament, and we take care not to come Drunk to it, nor to be guilty of any Irreverence and Disorder in the Celebration of it? I answer in short, this was the particular Unworthiness with which the *Apostle* taxeth the *Corinthians*; and which he warns them to amend, as they desire to escape the Judgments of God, such as they had already felt for this irreverent Carriage of theirs, so unsuitable to the Holy Sacrament: He finds no other Fault with them at present in this matter, though any other sort of Irreverence will proportionably expose Men to the like Punishment. He says nothing here of their habitual

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tual Preparation, by the sincere Purpose and Resolution of a good Life answerable to the Rules of the Christian Religion : This we may suppose he took for granted. However it concerns the Sacrament no more than it does Prayer or any other Religious Duty. Not but that it is very true that none but those who do heartily embrace the Christian Religion, and are sincerely resolved to frame their Lives according to the holy Rules and Precepts of it, are fit to communicate in this solemn Acknowledgment and Profession of it. So that it is a Practice very much to be countenanced and encouraged, because it is of great use, for Christians by way of Preparation for the Sacrament to examine themselves in a larger Sense than in all probability the *Apostle* here intended: I mean, to examine our past Lives, and the Actions of them, in order to a sincere Repentance of all our Errors and Miscarriages, and to fix us in the steady Purpose and Resolution of a better Life : Particularly, when we expect to have the Forgiveness of our Sins sealed to us, we should lay aside all Enmity and Thoughts of Revenge, and heartily forgive those that have offended us, and put in practice that universal Love and Charity which is represented to us by this holy Communion. And to this purpose we are earnestly exhorted in the Publick Office of the *Communion*, by way of due Preparation and Disposition for it, to *repent us truly of our sins past, to amend our lives, and to be in perfect charity with all men, that so we may be meet partakers of those holy mysteries.*

And because this Work of examining our selves concerning our State and Condition, and of exercising Repentance towards God, and Charity towards Men, is incumbent upon us as we are Christians, and can never be put in practice more seasonably and with greater advantage, than when we are meditating of this Sacrament, therefore besides our habitual

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Preparation by Repentance and the constant Endeavours of a holy Life, it is a very pious and commendable Custom in Christians, before their coming to the Sacrament, to set apart some particular Time for this Work of Examination. But how much Time every Person should allot to this Purpose, is matter of Prudence; and as it need not, so neither indeed can it be precisely determined. Some have greater reason to spend more time upon this Work than others; I mean those whose Accounts are heavier, because they have long run upon the score, and neglected themselves: And some also have more Leisure and Freedom for it, by reason of their easie Condition and Circumstances in the World; and therefore are obliged to allow a greater Portion of Time for the Exercises of Piety and Devotion. In general, no Man ought to do a Work of so great Moment and Concernment slightly and perfunctorily: And in this, as in all other Actions, the End is principally to be regarded. Now the End of Examining our selves is to understand our State and Condition, and to reform whatever we find amiss in our selves. And provided this End be obtained, the Circumstances of the Means are less considerable; whether more or less Time be allowed to this Work it matters not so much, as to make sure that the Work be thoroughly done.

And I do on purpose speak thus cautiously in this Matter, because some pious Persons do perhaps err on the stricter hand, and are a little superstitious on that side; insomuch that unless they can gain so much Time to set apart for a solemn Preparation, they will refrain from the Sacrament at that time, though otherwise they be habitually prepared. This I doubt not proceeds from a pious Mind; but as the *Apostle* says in another Case about the Sacrament, *shall I praise them in this? I praise them not.* For provided

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there be no wilful neglect of due Preparation, it is much better to come so prepared as we can, nay, I think it is our Duty so to do, rather than to abstain upon this *Punctilio*. For when all is done, the best Preparation for the Sacrament is the general Care and Endeavour of a good Life: And he that is thus prepared may receive at any time when Opportunity is offered, though he had no particular foresight of that Opportunity. And I think in that Case such a one shall do much better to receive than to refrain; because he is habitually prepared for the Sacrament, though he had no time to make such actual Preparation as he desired. And if this were not allowable, how could Ministers communicate with sick Persons at all times, or perswade others to do it many times upon very short and sudden Warning?

And indeed we cannot imagine that the Primitive Christians, who received the Sacrament so frequently, that for ought appears to the contrary, they judged it as essential and necessary a Part of their Publick Worship as any other Part of it whatsoever, even as their Hymns and Prayers, and reading and interpreting the Word of God: I say we cannot well conceive how they who celebrated it so constantly, could allot any more Time for a solemn Preparation for it, than they did for any other Part of Divine Worship: And consequently, that the *Apostle* when he bids the *Corinthians* examine themselves, could mean no more than that, considering the Nature and Ends of this Institution, they should come to it with great Reverence; and reflecting upon their former Miscarriages in this matter, should be careful upon this Admonition to avoid them for the future, and to amend what had been amiss; which to do, requires rather Resolution and Care, than any long time of Preparation.

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I speak this, that devout Persons may not be entangled in an apprehension of a greater Necessity than really there is of a long and solemn Preparation every time they receive the Sacrament. The great Necessity that lies upon Men is to live as becomes Christians, and then they can never be absolutely unprepared. Nay, I think this to be a very good Preparation; and I see not why Men should not be very well satisfied with it, unless they intend to make the same use of the Sacrament that many of the Papists do of Confession and Absolution, which is to quit with God once or twice a year, that so they may begin to Sin again upon a new score.

But because the Examination of our selves is a thing so very useful, and the Time which Men are wont to set apart for their Preparation for the Sacrament is so advantageous an Opportunity for the Practice of it; therefore I cannot but very much commend those who take this occasion to search and try their Ways, and to call themselves to a more solemn Account of their Actions: Because this ought to be done sometime, and I know no fitter time for it than this. And perhaps some would never find time to recollect themselves, and take the Condition of their Souls into serious Consideration, were it not upon this solemn Occasion.

The Sum of what I have said, is this, that supposing a Person to be habitually prepared by a Religious Disposition of Mind, and the general Course of a good Life, this more solemn actual Preparation is not always necessary: And it is better when there is an Opportunity to receive without it, than not to receive at all. But the greater our actual Preparation is, the better. For no Man can examine himself too often, and understand the State of his Soul too well, and exercise Repentance, and renew the Resolutions of a good Life too frequently. And there is perhaps no fitter opportunity for the doing

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of all this, than when we approach the Lord's Table, there to commemorate his Death, and to renew our Covenant with him to live as becomes the Gospel.

All the Reflexion I shall now make upon this Discourse, shall be from the consideration of what hath been said earnestly to excite all that profess and call themselves Christians to a due Preparation of themselves for this Holy Sacrament, and a frequent Participation of it according to the intention of our Lord and Saviour in the Institution of it, and the undoubted Practice of Christians in the primitive and best Times, when Men had more Devotion and fewer Scruples about their Duty.

If we do in good earnest believe that this Sacrament was instituted by our Lord in remembrance of his dying Love, we cannot but have a very high value and esteem for it upon that account. Methinks so often as we read in the Institution of it those words of our dear Lord, *Do this in remembrance of me*, and consider what he who said them did for us, this dying Charge of our best Friend should stick with us, and make a strong impression upon our Minds: Especially if we add to these those other words of his not long before his Death, *Greater love than this hath no Man, that a man lay down his life for his friend; ye are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you*. It is a wonderful Love which he hath expressed to us, and worthy to be had in perpetual remembrance. And all that he expects from us by way of thankful Acknowledgment, is to celebrate the Remembrance of it by the frequent Participation of this Blessed Sacrament. And shall this Charge, laid upon us by Him who laid down his Life for us, lay no Obligation upon us to the solemn Remembrance of that unparallel'd kindness which is the fountain of so many Blessings and Benefits to us? It is a sign we have no great sense of the Benefit when we are so unmindful of

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of our Benefactor as to forget him days without number. The Obligation he hath laid upon us is so vastly great, not only beyond all requital but beyond all expression, that if he had commanded us some very grievous thing we ought with all the readiness and chearfulness in the world to have done it ; how much more when he hath imposed upon us so easie a Commandment, a thing of no burthen but of immense Benefit? When he hath only said to us, *Eat O Friends, and drink O Beloved?* When he only invites us to his Table, to the best and most delicious Feast that we can partake of on this side Heaven?

If we seriously believe the great Blessings which are there exhibited to us, and ready to be conferred upon us, we should be so far from neglecting them, that we should heartily thank God for every Opportunity he offers to us of being made partakers of such Benefits. When such a price is put into our Hands, shall we want Hearts to make use of it? Methinks we should long with *David* (who saw but the shadow of these Blessings) to be satisfied with the good things of God's House, and to draw near his Altar ; and should cry out with him; *O when shall I come and appear before thee ! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* And if we had a just esteem of Things, we should account it the greatest Infelicity and Judgment in the World to be debarred of this Priviledge, which yet we do deliberately and frequently deprive our selves of.

We exclaim against the Church of *Rome* with great Impatience, and with a very just Indignation, for robbing the People of half this blessed Sacrament, and taking from them the *Cup of Blessing, the Cup of Salvation* ; and yet we can patiently endure for some Months, nay Years, to exclude our selves wholly from it. If no such great Benefits and Blessings belong to it, why do we complain of them for hindring

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dring us of any part of it? But if there do, why do we by our own neglect deprive our selves of the whole?

In vain do we bemoan the decay of our Graces and our slow Progreſs and Improvement in Chriſti- anity, whiſt we wilfully deſpiſe the beſt means of our growth in Goodneſs. Well do we obſerve that God ſhould ſend leanneſs into our Souls, and make them to conſume and pine away in perpetual Doubting and Trouble, if when God himſelf doth ſpread ſo boun- tiful a Table for us, and ſet before us the Bread of Life, we will not come and feed upon it with Joy and Thankfulneſs.

THE

THE
CASE of KNEELING

At the Holy Sacrament,
Stated and Resolved.

PART I.

Wherein these *QUERIES* are considered,

- I. *Whether Kneeling at the Sacrament be contrary to any express Command of Christ, obliging to the observance of a different Gesture?*
 - II. *Whether Kneeling be not a Deviation from that Example which our Lord set us at the first Institution?*
 - III. *Whether Kneeling be not unsuitable and repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, as being no Table Gesture?*
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Whether it be Lawful to receive the Holy Sacrament Kneeling?

THE Resolution of the most weighty and considerable Doubts which may in point of Conscience arise about this matter (and do at present much influence the Minds and Practices of many honest and well-meaning Dissenters) will depend upon the Resolution of these following Queries.

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1. *Whether Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Holy Sacrament according to the Law of the Land, be not contrary to some exprefs Law of Christ obliging to the observance of a different Posture ?*

2. *Whether Kneeling be not a Deviation from that Example which our Lord set us at the first Institution ?*

3. *Whether Kneeling be not altogether unsuitable and repugnant to the Nature of the Sacrament, as being no Table Gesture ?*

4. *Whether Kneeling, commanded in the Church of England, be not contrary to the general Practice of the Church of Christ in the first and purest Ages ?*

5. *Whether it be unlawful for us to receive Kneeling, because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolaters, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to idolatrous Ends and Purposes.*

1. *Whether Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Sacrament, in Obedience to the Law of the Land, be not a Transgression against some exprefs Law of Christ, which obliges us to observe another Gesture ?*

For Satisfaction in this Point, our only Recourse must be to the Holy Scriptures, contained in the Books of the New Testament, wherein the whole Body of Divine Laws delivered and enacted by our blessed Saviour, are collected and recorded by the Holy Ghost. And if there be any Command there extant concerning the Use of any particular Gesture in the Act of Receiving the Lord's Supper, we shall upon a diligent enquiry be sure to find it. But before I give in my Answer, I readily grant thus much by way of Preface : Whatsoever is enjoined and appointed by God to be perpetually used by all Christians throughout all Ages without any Alteration, that can never be nullified or altered by any Earthly Power or Authority whatsoever. When once the

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supreme Lawgiver and Governour of the World hath any ways signified and declared, that such and such Positive Laws shall be perpetually and unalterably observed, then those Laws (though in their own Nature, and with respect to the Subject-matter of them they be changeable) must remain in full force, and can admit of no change from the Laws of Men: It would be a piece of intolerable Pride, and the most daring Presumption, for any Earthly Prince, any Council, any Society of Men whatsoever, to oppose the known Will of the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth. In this Case nothing can take off the Force and Obligation of such Laws, but the same Divine Authority which first passed them into Laws. Thus much being granted and premised, I return this Answer to the Question proposed.

God hath been so far from establishing the unalterable Use of any particular Gesture in the Act of Receiving, that among all the Sacred Records of his Will there is not any express Command to determine our Practice one way or other. We are left perfectly at our liberty by God to use what comely Gesture we please, either Sitting, Kneeling, or Standing*. And if the Law of the Land did not restrain our Liberty, we might use any of the forementioned Gestures without the least violation of any Law of God. This perhaps at first sight may seem very strange and false to many of our Dissenting Brethren, who have been taught to believe otherwise; and it may be (to judge charitably) their Teachers and Pastors have in this particular been imposed on themselves, by the Writings and Assertions of other Men, whose Persons they have had in great admiration. But yet I am so secure of this Truth, that

* See the Case of Indifferent things.

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that I challenge all the World to produce the Chapter and Verse wherein any Command is given for the Use of any particular Gesture at the Celebration of the Lord's Supper. That *Papish* Principle of believing as the Church believes, and swallowing all for Gospel which she affirms to be so, though very mischievous in its Consequence, is not so *Papish*, that is, so ill, as to pin our Faith on the Sleeves of particular Men, and relying barely on the Word and Credit of any one Man whom we highly esteem, of what Party or Perswasion soever ; for this is to create a Pope to our selves, and make every Man whom we fancy infallible ; this is to make Two more than Six, and the Authority of one Man out-weigh the Authority of the Church, that is, a Society of Men who are nothing near so liable to Deception. I don't desire therefore to be trusted by any means in the Matter under present Consideration, and therefore I would have the Reader to observe this Rule ; Trust no Man's Eyes or Judgment where you are able to use your own, but follow the Example of the *Bereans*, so highly commended by St. Paul, *Act. 17. 11.* upon this very account ; that is, to make an ingenuous Enquiry into the Truth of things, to search the Scriptures, whether these things be so as I say and assert. If this course were generally follow'd, it would go a great way towards the composing those Differences, and curing those Divisions that at present are on foot amongst us, occasioned by several Tenets and Opinions about Matters of Religion. By this means a great many which pass for Divine Oracles and Doctrines would appear to be no other than the Whimsies and Inventions of Men. With this cautionary Advice I might fairly dismiss this Question, as being fully answered, and leave all my Readers to disprove me if they can.

But

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But because some may pretend to have no Leisure, and others want of Skill, and others are not endowed with Patience enough to search and examine this Matter thoroughly as it ought, I will yield all the charitable Assistance I am able towards their Relief, by doing the Work to their hands. My Business then at present is this, to collect and present to your view all those Places which relate to the Sacrament, and are most likely to inform us what our Lord by his Institution and Appointment hath obliged us to. And certainly, if there be any Command which ties us up to the Use of any particular Gesture, Sitting suppose, or Standing, and not Kneeling, we shall find it in one or other of the Evangelists, who give us a perfect Narrative of the whole Mind and Will of Christ in all Matters necessary to Faith and Salvation. Let us therefore bring them under a strict Examination. St. Matthew gives this account of the whole Matter: *As they were eating Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave Thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the Remission of Sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. And when they had sung an Hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives, Matth. 26. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.* Much to the same purpose is the account which St. Mark gives of this matter.

And as they did Eat, Jesus took Bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them and said, Take, eat, this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and when he had given Thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank of of it. And he said unto them, this is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine until

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that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God. And when they had Sung a Hymn they went out into the Mount of Olives, Mark. 14. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. And this is the Sum of what St. Mark delivers concerning the Lord's Supper. St. Luke with very little Variation thus describes the Matter.

*And he took Bread, and gave Thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my Body which is given for you, this do in Remembrance of me. Likewise also the Cup after Supper, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood which is shed for you, Luke 22. 19, 20. This Evangelist indeed makes mention of another Cup which our Lord took, and after he had blessed it, he said to his Disciples, Take this and divide it among your selves; and withal told them that he would not drink of the Fruit of the Vine until the Kingdom of God should come; which Cup plainly refers to the Passover, as will appear to any one who will consult and compare the 15, 16, 17, and 18 Verses of the fore-mentioned Chapter; and is supposed to be that Cup wherewith the Jews were wont to begin the Paschal Feast, which they Blessed or Consecrated in this Form of Words: * Blessed be God who created the Fruit of the Vine. And whereas our Lord saith he will drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine, his meaning is, that he would never celebrate the Feast of the Passover with them any more after that time, but their next Festival meeting should be in Heaven, and this is very consistent with our Lord's drinking another Cup after this, which he consecrated to another Use and Signification in the Sacrament, Ver. 20. And this is all the Light this Divine Writer affords us concerning the outward Rites and Ceremonies, which our Lord used himself at the Institution of the Sacrament*

* See Dr. Lightfoot on Mat. 26. 26. Horæ Heb. & Talmud.

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crament, and established for the use of all Christians in all succeeding Ages.

As for St. *John*, he makes no mention at all of the Institution of this Holy Feast by our Lord. All that can be collected from his Writings relates to the Passover, or, according to the Learned * *Dr. Lightfoot*, to what past between Christ and his Disciples at a common and ordinary Meal in *Bethany*, and that for this reason among many others judiciously urged by him, because the Disciples thought when our Lord had said to him, *ver. 27. That thou doest do quickly*, that he had given order to *Judas*, who kept the Bag, to buy those things that they had need of against the Feast, *viz.* the Passover; and therefore all those Passages, and that Discourse related by St. *John* in in the foregoing Verses of that Chapter, were transacted at an ordinary and common Supper. And indeed this seems to be the great End and Design which St. *John* proposed to himself in writing his Gospel, and which throughout he constantly pursues, *viz.* to add out of his own Knowledge several remarkable Passages (especially such as tend to demonstrate the Divinity of our Saviour) as had been omitted by the other Evangelists in their History of the Birth, Life, Actions and Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour. There is another Passage in St. *John's* Gospel, *John* 5. 53. which in the Judgment of many Learned Divines, both Ancient and Modern, hath respect to the Lord's Supper, though not at that time instituted when those mysterious words were uttered by our Saviour;

Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood hath Eternal Life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my Flesh is meat indeed

* *Joh. 13.* from *Ver. 1, to 31.* vid. *Hor. Heb. Tal. p. 300.* and *Mat. 26. 6.*

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indeed and my Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my Flesh and drinketh my Blood dwelleth in me and I in him, Joh. 5. 54, 55, 56. Now all that can be inferred from these Words, as they relate to this Holy Feast, is only thus much, that it's highly necessary for all Christians (who have an opportunity to do it) to partake of the Lord's Supper as they would partake in the Merits of his Sacrifice, and the Efficacy of his Death and his Sufferings, and that none but such as do receive the Tokens and Signs of his Body broken, and Blood shed for their Sins, shall be owned and rewarded by him as his Friends. These are all the Places that we meet with in the Gospel : Let us now see what is delivered in the *Acts* and other Writings of the Apostles and divinely inspired Authors. Among all their Writings there is but one place which gives any account of the History of the Sacrament, and Institution of it, and that is in the First Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. 11. where St. Paul declares that what he delivered to them, he received by immediate Revelation from Christ himself, viz. *That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took Bread, and when he had given Thanks he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner he took the Cup when he had supped, saying, this Cup is the new Testament in my Blood, this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this Bread and Drink this Cup ye do shew (or shew ye) the Lord's Death till he come,* ver. 23, 24, 25, 26. There are several other places* wherein the Holy Sacrament is mentioned and described by several Names and Titles, suitable to the Nature and Ends of it, which for brevity sake I omit, and desire the Reader to consult at his leisure ; and I would not put him to that trouble, if

* 1 Cor. 10. 16, 21. 1 Cor. 11. 20. Acts. 2. 46. Acts 20. 7.

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if that they did contain any thing that made against Kneeling, or that lookt like a Command for the Use of any other Gesture. Let us now look back a little upon the places forementioned, and see what our Lord ordained and appointed to be of perpetual Use in his Church.

The Apostles and Disciples of our Lord at the institution of this Sacrament were the Representatives of the whole Church, and are to be considered under a double Capacity : Either as Governours and Ministers intrusted by Christ with the Power of Dispensing and Administring the Sacrament, or as Ordinary and Lay-Communicants.

If we consider them as Governours and Stewards of the Mysteries, their Duty to which they are obliged by the exprefs Command of their Lord, is to take the Bread into their Hands, to bless and consecrate it to that Mysterious and Divine Use to which he designed it, to break it, to give it to the Communicants, as he gave it to them : And so in like manner to take the Cup, to bless it, to give it to their Fellow Christians.

That which they were obliged to do by the Command of our Lord, considered as private Men, and in common with all Believers, was to take and receive the Consecrated Elements of Bread and Wine, to Eat and Drink, and to do all this in Commemoration of his wonderful Love in giving his Body to be broken, and his Blood to shed for the Sins of the World.

And what the least Syllable or Shadow of a Command is there here in all this History for the Use of any Gesture in the Act of Receiving? Since then the Holy Scripture is altogether silent as to this Matter, its silence is a full and clear Demonstration that Kneeling is not repugnant to any exprefs Command of our Lord, because no Gesture was ever commanded at all: And this hath been ingenuously confessed in writing by a great Enemy to Kneeling,
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and a great Advocate for Sitting, * *That the Gesture of Sitting is but a matter of Circumstance, and not expressly commanded.*

Object. But the *Scotch* Ministers, assembled at *Perth*, affirm, that when our Lord at the Institution commanded his Disciples to do this, he did by those Words command them to use that Gesture which he used at that time, as well as to Take, Eat, Drink, &c. The force of their Argument lies in this, if it have any force at all: Our Saviour sate at the Passover, as the † Scriptures plainly informs us, and it is to be supposed he continued in the same Posture when he instituted and administred the Sacrament which was at the close of the Passover; therefore *Do this* relates to, and includes the Gesture amongst other things. But this is a miserable Shift, which tends to sink rather than support their Cause.

Ans. 1. For first, If our Lord did sit when he Administred the Sacrament (which we will suppose at present) yet there is no reason in the world to incline us to think, that he intended by those Words, *Do this*, to oblige us to observe his Gesture only, and not several other Circumstances, which he observed at the same time. Since Christ hath not restrained and interpreted these Words, *Do this*, so that they should only respect Sitting as he did, why should we not think our selves obliged to do all that he did at the same time as well as this. For Example, if these words may be interpreted thus, *Do this*, that is, sit as Christ did, why not thus also *Do this*, that is celebrate the Sacrament in an upper Room, in a private House late at Night, or the Even-

* A Manuscript of an unknown Author cited by Mr. Paybody, p. 48.

† Mat. 26. 20. Mar. 14. 18. Luk. 22. 14.

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Evening, after a full Supper, * in the Company of eleven or twelve at most, and they only Men, with your Heads covered according to the Custom of those Countries, and with unleavened Bread? There lieth as great an Obligation upon all Christians to observe all these Circumstances in Imitation of our Lord by vertue of these words, *Do this*, as there doth to Sit. So that this Argument violently recoils upon those that urge it, and proves a great deal more than they are willing to have it. It concludes strongly against their own Practices and the liberty they take in omitting some things and pressing the necessary observance of others, upon a reason which equally obliges to all.

Ans. II. But I desire our Dissenting Brethren (who may be of the same Perswasion with these *Scotch-men*) to take this further Consideration along with them, which I think will turn the Scales, and make deep Impressions upon tender Consciences, and oblige them to observe most of the other Circumstances which they omit rather than this of Sitting, which they so earnestly press and contend for. All those forementioned Circumstances (except the two last, which two are generally allowed among Learned Men on all sides) are expressly mentioned in the Gospel, and were without dispute observed by Christ at the Institution of the Sacrament: But the particular Gesture used by him at that time is not expressly mentioned, and what it was is very disputable and dubious, as I shall evince by and by under the second Query.

How then can any Man think himself obliged in Conscience, by the force of these words, *Do this*, to do what Christ is no where expressly said to do, and not obliged to do what the Scripture affirms he

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really

* Mat. 26. 20. Mar. 14. 17. Luk 22. 14.

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really did ? Why that which is dark and dubious should be made an infallible Rule of Conscience, and that which is plainly and evidently set down in Scripture should have no force, nor be esteemed any Rule at all : These are Questions, I confess, beyond my Capacity, and surpassing my Skill to resolve.

Answ. III. It's clear from St. Paul * in the fore-cited Place that those Words of our Lord, *Do this*, do respect only the Bread and Wine, which signify the Body and Blood of Christ, and those other Actions there specified by him, which are essential to the right and due Celebration of that holy Feast. For when it is said, *Do this in remembrance of me*, and, *this do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me*; and, *As oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come*; it's plain that, *Do this*, must be restrained to the Sacramental Actions there mentioned, and not extended to the Gesture, of which the Apostle speaks not a word. Our Lord instituted the Sacrament in remembrance of his Death and Passion, and not in remembrance of his Gesture in Administring it : And consequently, *Do this*, is a general Command, obliging us only to such particular Actions and Rites as he had instituted, and made necessary to be used in order to this great End, viz. to signify and represent his Death, and that Bloody Sacrifice which he offered to his Father on the Cross for us miserable Sinners. Upon the whole matter, I think we may certainly conclude, That there is not a tittle of a Command in the whole New Testament to oblige us to receive the Lord's Supper in any particular Posture ; and if any be so scrupulous after all, as not to receive it in any other Gesture, but what is expressly commanded, they must never receive it as long as they live : And then I leave this to their se-

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* 1 Cor. II. 23. 4, 5, 6, 27, 28 Verses.

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rious Consideration, How they will be ever able to excuse their neglect of a known necessary Duty (such as receiving the Sacrament is) before God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved us so much as to send his Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins: How they will ever answer to their Crucified Saviour their living and dying in a breach of an exprefs Command of his given a little before his Passion to *Do this in remembrance of him*, meerly because the Gesture prescribed by Authority, was cross to their private Wills and Phanfies, but not to the Mind and Will of God.

2. For the further Proof and Confirmation of this Assertion, That there is no exprefs Command in Scripture for the use of any particular Gesture in the Act of Receiving the Sacrament, I will appeal to the Judgment and Practice of our Dissenting Brethren, and all the Reformed Churches in *Europe*.

1. To begin with our Non-conforming Brethren. There are a great many serious and sincere hearted Persons among them, who profess that were they left to their Liberty, and not tied up by the Law, to kneel at the Sacrament, they could with a safe Conscience use that Gesture as well as any other. And they further tell us, That they are willing and ready to Communicate with us, provided we would Administer the Sacrament to them either sitting or standing, that is, any way but that which is imposed by Law. For the Rule by which they conduct their Consciences in this matter, is this; Things in their own Nature indifferent, which are no where commanded or prohibited by God in Scripture, cannot, nor ought not to be restrained and limited by any Power or Authority of Man: And therefore all such things which God left free for us to do, or not to do, without Sin, become sinful to us when
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imposed by human Authority. It's remote from my Business to shew how weak and false a Principle this is, and of what mischievous Consequence to the Peace of the Church, and for that reason I will pass it by: But thus much may be inferr'd from this Tenet to my purpose, that they who hold and urge it as a Reason why they cannot Receive Kneeling, which otherwise they could safely do, plainly own that as to the Gesture, in the Act of Receiving, it is in its own Nature indifferent, and left free by God for us to use or refuse as we think fit, and by necessary Consequence that there is no express Command given by God for the use of any particular Gesture. It could not be a matter of Indifferency to our Dissenting Brethren, whose Principle this is, if there were no Law of Man to kneel at the Sacrament; and now there is such a Law, it could not be indifferent to them whether they received sitting or standing, as they profess it is, if there were any Law of God obliging to the use of any one Gesture whatsoever.

2. That there is no express Command in Scripture for any one Gesture in the Act of Receiving, may be inferr'd from the Judgment and Practice of all the Reformed Churches abroad; whose Judgment and Example will, I presume, sway much with those who separate from the Church of *England*, as not being sufficiently purged from the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome* as other neighbour Churches are, and who stood once engaged in a Solemn Covenant, to reform the Churches of *England* and *Ireland* according to the Word of God, and the Pattern of the best Reformed Churches.

Let us now compare the Practice of our Church with the Example of the Protestant Churches abroad, and see whether she ought to reform the Gesture prescribed at the Sacrament.

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The Reformed Churches of *France*, and those of *Geneva* and *Helvetia* stand, the *Dutch* generally sit, but in some places (as in *West-Friesland*) they stand. The Churches of the *Bohemian* and *Augustin* Confession, which spread through the large Kingdoms of *Bohemia*, *Denmark*, and *Sweden*, through *Norway*, the Dukedom of *Saxony*, *Lithuania* and the Ducal *Prussia* in *Poland*, the Marquisate of *Brandenburg* in *Germany*, and several other Places and free Cities in that Empire, do for the most part, if not all of them, retain the Gesture of Kneeling. The *Bohemian* Churches were reformed by *John Husse* and *Ferom* of *Prague*, who suffered Martyrdom at *Constance* about the Year 1416. long before *Luther's* time, and those of the *Ausbourg* or *Augustin* Confessions were founded and reformed by *Luther*, and were the first Protestants properly so called. But these Churches so early reformed and of so large Extent, did not only use the same Gesture that our Church enjoins at the Sacrament, but they, together with those of the *Helvetic* Confession, did in three general * Synods unanimously condemn the sitting Gesture (though they esteem it in it self lawful) as being scandalous for this remarkable Reason, viz. because it was used by the *Arrians* (as their Synods call the *Socinians*) in contempt of our Saviour's Divinity; who therefore placed themselves as Fellows with their Lord at his Table. And thereupon they entreat and exhort all Christians of their Communion to change sitting into kneeling or standing, both which Ceremonies we indifferently leave free, according as the Custom of any Church hath obtained, and we approve of their use without scandal and blame. Moreover they affirm That these Socinians who deny Christ to be God, wer
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* 1. At Cracow, Anno Dom. 1573. 2. Petricow, or Peterkaw, 1578. 3. Wladislaw, 1583.

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the first that introduced sitting at the Sacrament into their Churches contrary to the practice of all the Evangelical Churches in Europe. Among all these Foreign Churches of the Reformation, there is but one that I can find which useth sitting, and forbids kneeling, for fear of Bread-worship, but yet in that Synod wherein they condemned kneeling they left it to the choice of their Churches to use standing, sitting, or an ambulatory Gesture * (as the *French* do) and at last conclude thus; *These Articles are so settled by mutual consent, that if the good of the Churches require it, they may and ought to be changed, augmented or diminished.* What now should be the Ground and Reason of this Variety both in Opinion and Practice touching the Gesture to be used at the Lord's Supper? Is it to be supposed or imagined that an Assembly of Learned and Pious Divines met together on purpose to consult how to reform their Churches, according to the pure Word of God, should through Weakness and Inadvertency overlook an expresse Command of Christ for the perpetual Use of any particular Gesture, if any such there had been: Or shall we be so uncharitable as to think, that all these eminent Churches wilfully past it by, and established what was most agreeable to their own Phanxies contrary to the known Will of God? Would they have given liberty to all of their Communion to use several Gestures according to the Custom of their several Churches, if our Lord had tied them to observe but one? Would they declare (as the *Dutch* Synod doth) that what they enjoined might be altered, if the good of the Church so required; if so be sitting had been expressly commanded by our Lord, to be used by all Christians to the end of the World? No undoubtedly, they would not, we cannot either in Reason or Charity suppose it.

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* Harmon. 4. Synods of Holl.

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The true Principle upon which all these Reformed Churches built, and by which they are able to reconcile all this seeming Difference in this Matter, is the very same with that which the Church of *England* goes by in her Synods and Convocations, *viz.* That as to Rites and Ceremonies of an indifferent Nature, every National Church hath Authority to institute, change and abolish them, as they in Prudence and Charity shall think most fit and conducive to the setting forth God's Glory, the Edification of their People, and the Decent and Reverend Administration of the Holy Sacrament*. Whosoever therefore refuses to receive the Lord's Supper according to the Constitution of the Church of *England*, purely because kneeling is contrary to the express Command of Christ, must condemn the Judgment and Practice of all the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, who all agree in this, That the Gesture in the Act of Receiving is to be reckoned among things indifferent, and that whether we sit, or kneel, or stand, or Receive walking, we transgress no Law of God; and consequently they prove my Assertion true, That kneeling is not contrary to any express Command no more than any other, because they allow of all lawful in themselves to be used, which cannot consist with an express Command for the use of any one Gesture whatsoever.

* Vid. Art. 34. observat. of the *French* and *Dutch* Divines on the Harmony of Confessions, Edit. *Geneva* 1681. Sect. 14. p. 120 *In hoc etiam ritu* (speaking of kneeling at the Sacrament) *suam cuique Ecclesiae libertatem saluum relinquendam arbitramur.*

QUERY II.

Whether Kneeling be not a Deviation from that Example which Christ set us at the first Institution?

FOR a full and satisfactory Resolution of this Doubt, I shall propound these four following Particulars to the Consideration of our Dissenting Brethren, which I will endeavour with all Brevity and Clearness to make good.

1. *That it can never be proved, so as that the Conscience may surely build upon it, what Gesture Christ and his Apostles used at the Celebration of the Sacrament.*
2. *Supposing that our Lord did sit, yet his bare Example doth not oblige all Christians to a like Practice.*
3. *That they who urge the Example of Christ for our Rule in this Case, do not follow it themselves.*
4. *That they who kneel at the Lord's Supper in compliance with the Custom and Constitution of the Church, do manifestly follow the Example of Christ.*

First, The particular Gesture used by Christ and his Apostles at the Institution and Celebration of the Sacrament can never be demonstrated so as that the Conscience may surely build upon it. This I shall endeavour to make good these two ways: First, We have no sure ground for it in Scripture. Secondly, The Customs observed by the Jews render it very uncertain and disputable.

1. All that can be gathered from Scripture amounts to no more than this, that as they were eating, or

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as they did eat, as the Phrase is rendred in St. Mark, *Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his Disciples ; and he took the Cup (when he had supped, saith St. Paul, after Supper, as St. Luke hath it) and gave Thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it**. Now it's very clear from this account which the Scripture gives, that our Lord did Institute and Administer the Sacrament to his Disciples, and that they did Receive it : But whether sitting, kneeling, or standing, is no where mentioned, nor plainly determined. It's clear that he instituted this Holy Feast at the close of the Paschal Feast, for he took the † Bread as they were eating, and the Cup when he had supped ; that he did celebrate the Passover according to the usual manner of the *Jews* in those times, which was in a discumbing posture, on Beds placed about the Table, much after the manner of our lying or leaning upon Couches. Yet whether after all the Apostles Received, or our Lord Administred the Sacrament still sitting after the same manner as they did at the Passover, is not exprest, nor can it be certainly concluded from the Word of God. The utmost strength of their Argument who urge sitting in imitation of our Saviour's Example, can arise to no more then this ; That it's probable our Lord did not alter the Gesture he used at the Passover, when he instituted the Sacrament. But who sees not that a Probability is far from a Certainty. A thing may be really false, though it seem likely to be true : And that Opinion which is speculatively probable, may, when reduced to Practice, become a great Sin and a great Errour. Thus to refuse to receive the Holy Sacrament

* Matth. 26. 26. Mark. 14: 22. 1 Cor. 11. 25. Luke 22. 20.

† Luke 22. 14. Matth. 26. 20. ἀνέκλιτο μὴ δὲ τῶν δώδεκα, in the Original.

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ment kneeling, and thereby neglect a known necessary Duty, and not only so, but to disturb the Peace and break the Unity of the Church, upon a bare probability that our Lord fate, which we are not, cannot be sure of, is a great fault in all who are guilty of it: For they appeal to an uncertain Example against a plain certain Command, *viz.* To receive the Tokens and Pledges of our Saviour's dying Love, and *to do this in Remembrance of him.* They therefore who urge the Example of Christ for sitting at the Sacrament, and as a Plea against kneeling, would do well first to make the Example appear, and prove that he did sit, before they press a Conformity.

2. If we consult the Records of *Jewish* Antiquities, and the Writings of Learned Men, both *Jews* and *Christians*, concerning the Passover, and the manner of the *Jews* Celebrating it, we shall find that they did not keep to one and the same Gesture throughout the Solemnity. For the *Babylon* and *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Maimonides* and *Buxtorf* do certify us that they did alter their Posture at the Passover, though the lying or leaning Posture was generally and most religiously used and observed at this Feast above any other. And the Scripture gives some Hints and Intimations of the Truth of what they deliver.

1. It was the ancient Custom of the *Jews*, and of those * Eastern Countries at their ordinary Feasts and Entertainments to wash their Hands and their Feet, and especially at their Religious Feasts to wash their Hands often. At the Passover they washed their Hands thrice at least, according to the *Talmudists* and the Authors forcited. Which Ce-

* Gen. 18. 4, 19. c. 2. 24, 32. Matth. 15. 2. Mark. 7. 3. Luke 7. 44.

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Ceremony could not well, nor was not in all likelihood performed during their lying or leaning Posture on their left Sides, as their manner was*. For the reason of their washing at all, and so frequently, was, that no legal Impurity or Uncleaness might cleave to them, and to signifie the great care they took to keep this Solemn Feast holy to the Lord: And as they were nice and curious in purifying and washing themselves, so in keeping the Beds, Table, Dishes, and all other Utensils necessary for this Feast, clean and free from all pollution too†. To wash so often more than the Law required, and the general Custom of those Eastern and hot Countries warranted, was a Pharisaical Invention, and superstitiously abused by them; and as such it's certain our Lord did not use it, but that he did wash sometimes before he eat the Paschal Supper, and after he had sat down as the manner was, there is little reason to doubt; and all that I infer from hence is, that when he washed, be it once or twice, he altered his Posture, and in all probability either arose from his || Bed and went to the place where Water and Vessels were prepared and set for such Uses; or had Water brought to him in a Basin, wherein he washed either sitting upright, or standing; which are both different from that Gesture which was peculiar and proper to the Passover. St. John in Chap. 13. 2, 4, 5 verses, will explain and confirm this Custom we are speaking of. There he tells us, *how that Supper being ended* (that is, in a manner, or almost ended, for by comparing the 12 and 26 and 27 Verses together, we shall find plainly

* Tract. Berachoth. Pefachin. Maimon. in Chametz. Umat-fah. Buxtorf. Synag. c. 13.

† Vid. Buxtorf. Synag. c. 12. p. 286.

|| Vid. John 2. 6.

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plainly that they had not quite finished their Supper) *Jesus ariseth from Supper, and laid aside his Garments, and took a Towel and girded himself, and after that poureth Water into a Basin, and began to wash the Disciples Feet.* There are Learned Men * on both sides, who think all this was done at the Feast of the Passover, and that towards the close of it, when he instituted the Lord's Supper, but I shall wave this, and not insist upon it, because, as I hinted before, I believe as the Learned Dr. *Lightfoot* doth, it was no more than an ordinary or common Meal, and therefore I only shall conclude thus much from it, which I think is very probable; That it was usual with the *Jews* to wash at their Feasts, and that in Supper time: And that our Saviour complied with this Custom. To wash the Feet of the Guests was the Office of Servants, and it was altogether unusual for the Master of the Feast to do, but our Lord to set his Disciples an Example of Humility and Charitable Condescension one to another, performs this servile † Office himself towards them, which he might as well have done after Supper, if it had not been usual to have washed in Supper time; seeing then it appears partly from Scripture, and partly from ancient Monuments of *Jewish* Customs, that the *Jews* were wont both before and at their Civil and Religious Feasts to wash, and particularly at the Passover, then it's very probable our Lord did so too, and altered his Posture as they did; nay it is very probable that our Lord, to make his Disciples understand what he was about to do, did at the Institution of this New Feast, the Holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood, wash before it, and having changed the Posture that he was in before at the

* Vid. Grot. in loc. Dr. Hammond on v. 26. Mark. 14. 14.

† Joh. 13, 14, 15.

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the eating of the Paschal Supper, did not resume it, but used a new Posture at this new Festival Solemnity, but what that was is not certain.

2. At the beginning of the Paschal Feast, the *Jews* did put themselves into this Discumbing or Leaning Posture, and used it while they eat and drank the two first Cups of Wine (for every Guest was obliged to drink four Cups at this Feast*) but at the third Cup, called the *Cup of Blessing* in their Language, and the fourth, styled the *Song or Psalm Cup*, when they Sung the Hymn, there was no necessity of lying along; and it's likely our Lord took an opportunity when he took the third Cup to change the Use and Signification of it, and to institute the Eucharistical Cup †; called by St. Paul the *Cup of Blessing*, 1 Cor. 10. 16.

3. Before they drank of the third Cup, the Master of the Feast took a piece of Unleaven'd Bread and brake it, and after he had eat some himself, he offers the Remainder to the rest of the Company to do the like||. After this he proceeds to take some of the bitter Herbs, and to dip them in a thick Sawce, called by them *Charoseth*, (which was formed in the shape of a Brick, to represent the hard Slavery undergone by their Fore-fathers in the Brick-kilns of *Egypt*) and commanded all the Society to follow his Example. Now this was not done in an inclining Posture, as the *Jewish* Doctors teach us** ; and they give this reason for it, because this was to put them in mind of the *Egyptian* Bondage, and therefore here they stood, in all probability, because to eat standing was

* As the Talmudists and forementioned Writers testify

† Vid. Dr. *Lightsfoot* Hor. Heb 291.

|| See Mr. *Ainsworth* a learned Nonconformist in. Ex. 12. 8. 11.

** Buxt. Syn. c. 15. p. 300.

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was the manner of Slaves, whereas lying along after a lordly manner, was in token of that Ease and Rest they enjoyed in the Land of *Canaan*, and of their Redemption from the House of Bondage*. So often therefore as they eat the bitter Herbs, so often they changed their Gesture.

4. Though the *Jews* in their Solemn Feasts used Discumbing, yet in Blessing and giving Thanks before the Feasts, they were, as *Philo* relateth†, in a standing Gesture, with their Eyes and Hands lifted up to Heaven. And therefore it's no way probable that Christ and his Apostles would continue in their Table Gesture at the Blessing of the Holy Supper, which is an higher Ordinance than the Passover: Because this would be very unsuitable to so great a Solemnity; especially too if Dr. *Lightfoot's* Opinion be true (and it may be so for any thing that appears to the contrary,) viz. that Christ changed the third Cup at the Passover, called the *Cup of Blessing*, into the Sacramental Cup, because it was the Custom of the *Jews* then to alter their Table Gesture that was peculiar to the Passover; and it's highly improbable that our Lord would continue in the Table Gesture, contrary to the general and current Custom of the *Jews*. They that don't think so as I do in this particular, will receive little Advantage by being cross. For if it may be supposed that our Lord sate sometimes when the *Jews* were wont to stand, it may equally be supposed that he stood sometimes when the *Jews* were wont to sit; and what becomes of their Argument for sitting at the Sacrament after the Example of Christ; because that stands built upon Supposition that our Lord sate at the Passover, as the *Jews* did, and continued in the same Gesture when

* Pefachin fol. 37 2. Hor. Heb. 291, 292.

† In vita contemplat. p. 695. col. Allobro. edit. 1613.

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when he instituted the Sacrament, which was before the Paschal Solemnity was over. I will only observe this briefly by the way, and then proceed to shut up all upon this Head.

That those Non-conformists, who cry out so vehemently against the Church for imposing, and her Members for using a Kneeling Gesture, were very unfortunate in their Choice when they pitch upon sitting, and urged it as the only necessary Gesture to receive in, in Conformity to our Saviour's Practice and Example: Because the standing Gesture may be much better maintained and defended than sitting, and hath more and greater Probabilities attending it.

If therefore variety of Gestures were used by the Jews at the Passover, and it no where appears from Scripture that our Lord did not comply in this matter, then we cannot know for certain what the particular Gesture was which Christ used at the Institution of the Sacrament; it might be lying along, and it might be sitting upright; it might be standing in an adoring Posture, with his Hands and Eyes lifted up to Heaven, which is much more probable than either of the former, for the Reasons forementioned, we cannot certainly say which, and yet we must be certain of one before we can build upon it as an Infallible Rule of Conscience. Let it be therefore granted to our Brethren, who differ from us in this point, that our Saviour sate at the Passover, that the Sacrament was Instituted by him before the Paschal Feast was fully ended, that the Disciples eat the Sacramental Bread, and drank the Sacramental Cup in the same Posture as they eat and drank at the Passover: What of all this? how will the necessity of a sitting Gesture appear from these Premises: Why, thus: Therefore our Lord instituted and administered the Holy Sacrament sitting, say they. How
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doth this follow of course I ask? Since they eat and drank in several Postures at the Paschal Feast.

I confess the Argument had been strong if they could make it appear, that throughout the whole Solemnity of the Passover no other Gesture but sitting was used by our Lord: But this I am sure can never be done, and consequently their Conclusion can never be good. From the whole I conclude thus much; Since the Example of our Lord cannot be certainly known in this matter, our Church cannot be charged for deviating from it: And consequently to scruple Conformity to the Practice of our Church, because she doth not conform to the Practice of Christ, which no body can certify us of, is very unjust and unreasonable.

2. Supposing our Lord did sit, as they will have it, yet his bare Example doth not oblige all Christians to a like Practice.

1. Because naked Examples, without some Rule or Note added to them to signify that it is the Mind and Will of God, to have them constantly followed and perpetually imitated by us, have not the force of a Law perpetually obliging the Conscience. Thus in our present Case, though our Lord did sit at the Sacrament, yet his Example alone doth not become an everlasting Rule for all Ages to observe, because he hath nowhere discovered his binding Will and Pleasure in this particular. And consequently since he hath left us in the dark, we may act contrary to his Will and Intention, when we so zealously press and follow his Example, especially in this matter relating to Gesture. For even under the Law, where all other Circumstances of Time, Place, Habits, and the Ceremonies relating to Divine Worship, were with great Particularity described, this of Gesture was left free and undetermined. God never obliged them to use any particular Gesture in any particular Part of his Worship,
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but left it to their choice, whether to kneel or stand, or bow down their Heads and Bodies, or fall prostrate on the Earth; to use all or any one of these as Custom and their own pious Prudence should prompt and direct them. Seeing then that the Gesture in the Worship of God was never determined under the Law; since it was and is in its own Nature a mutable Ceremony in the Service of God, it remains so unto this day: Our Lord left it as he found it, unless it can be proved that he hath by some Command or Note of Immutability fixt and determined it to all succeeding Ages. But because no such Command or Note is to be found, therefore we are not tied in Conscience to a strict Imitation of his Example. A few Instances will clear this point. Our Lord was not baptized till he was about Thirty years of Age, (*Luke 3. 23.*) but this Example is not esteemed by the generality of Dissenters a Law or Warrant for us to defer our Baptism so long. So he instituted the Sacrament a little before his Death: But is there no Obligation upon us to receive it but when we are near our Graves, and under a prospect of Death. He also instituted and administred the Sacrament after a full Meal in an upper Room, to Men only. Doth his bare Example oblige us to observe punctually all these Circumstances or no? If it doth, why do our Brethren of the Separation take the liberty to depart from his Example in these things; if his Example layeth no necessity upon us to follow it in these Particulars, how doth sitting become necessary barely upon the account of his Example? I desire them therefore seriously and impartially to examine this matter, and see if they can assign any Reasons for this Liberty they take of following the Example of our Saviour in some things, and not in others, where there is no other Rule to guide them. I believe they will be constrained to do one of these two things, either to

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withdraw their Suit against Kneeling, and quit their own Principle, or condemn their own Practices as shamefully repugnant to it.

2. The bare Example of Christ is no warrant for us to act by, because the great End and Usefulness of that glorious Example he left us, consists in this, *viz.* that it shews the Possibility, and clears up the Sense of his Laws, and excites and encourages us to the Practice of them; it puts the Rule into Activity, and sets it forth to the Life: It is to our Lives, as Exhortation is to Doctrine, it thrusts us forward to do that which we were obliged in Conscience to do before. *Whatsoever our Lord hath commanded us to do, in that only we are necessarily bound to imitate him: But where there is no Precept, there is no Necessity.* We may do it if we will, and if we can innocently (*as in the Case of a single Life*) but we are not under Constraint and an indispensable Obligation. He hath commanded us to be meek and lowly, to be just and merciful, to be patient under all our Troubles and Afflictions, to follow peace with all Men, to be ever contented and resigned to the Will of our Heavenly Father in all States and Conditions of Life, and the like: And in all these things he became an Example to us, that we might follow his Steps. He commands us to do what he performed himself, and that which we are concerned in, if we would walk surely, is first to look for our Rule, and then for our Encouragement to look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. It's true indeed, we are commanded in Scripture to follow the Examples of the Apostles, so far forth as they follow Christ; and the Example of our Lord is made the Touchstone to try all others by; but then, if we would know what is our Duty, we must bring his Example to the Rule: For as to *Preach Christ* and to *Preach the Gospel*, to *Obey Christ* and *Obey the Gospel*,

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Gospel, are Phrases of a like import in * Scripture, so in like manner to follow Christ is all one with following the Gospel-Rule, or doing as Christ did in Obedience to his Commands. The Sum of all is this, An Example may help to interpret a Law, but of it self it is no Law: Against a Rule no Example is a competent Warrant, and if the Example be according to the Rule, it's not the Example, but the Rule, that is the measure of our Actions.

3. The bare Example of Christ is no Warrant for us to go by, because he was an extraordinary Person, and did many things which we cannot, and many which we must not do. He fasted forty Days and forty Nights, and spent whole Nights in Prayer; he wrought many Miracles to prove the Truth of his Doctrine, and his Divine Authority by, that he was the *Messias*, the Son of God and Saviour of Mankind; he was a Prophetical Priest, by which Office he was obliged to teach us the whole Mind of God in all things necessary to Faith and Salvation, and to offer up himself as a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, nothing (we should quickly experiment) would be more vain and foolish than Attempts of an Imitation in some things; and nothing more wicked, than to think and believe we may and ought to follow his Example in others. To dye to Sin, and crucifie the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, is a good way (as the Scripture teaches and warrants) of imitating our Lord's Death in a Spiritual Sense: So to dye rather than deny the Faith and Dishonour of our Saviour, is Great and Praise-worthy; but to Dye for Sin, either our own, or other Mens, to propose a meritorious Death to our selves, and by way of expiation, is a Sin of so
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* 1 Cor. 11. 1. Acts 5. 42. Acts 11. 20. Mark 16. 15.
Heb. 5. 9. 2 Thess. 1. 8. Col. 2. 6.

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deep a stain, that the Blood of Christ will not wash out ; for this in effect is trampling upon and vili-
fying of the precious Blood of our Saviour, and to detract from the Virtue and Merits of his Sacrifice, and thereby render it weak and insufficient to save us. Blindly therefore to follow the Example of Christ, is a certain way to run into Error and Mis-
chief. We must then of necessity, if we would fol-
low him safely, seek out for a plain Rule in the Word of God, or guide our selves by the Dictates of Rea-
son and Prudence, and either way is a sufficient Demonstration that a bare Example is not to be trusted to. Those who urge the Example of Christ for Sitting, were somewhat aware of this, namely, that his Example, and those of his Apostles, are not to be * *imitated* by us in all things, and therefore they lay down this for their Maxim and Guide.

*We are bound to imitate Christ, and the commendable Example of his Apostles, in all things wherein it is not evi-
dent they had special Reasons moving them thereunto, which do not concern us.* But I would willingly be in-
formed how we shall be ever able to know when they acted upon special Reasons, and what they were, that we may know our Duty, if a bare Ex-
ample without any Rule obliges us : And if we guide our selves by Scripture or Reason in this Mat-
ter, then they are the measures of the Example. Besides, if we are not to imitate them in such things which they were moved to do upon special Reasons which did not concern us, then we are obliged to imitate their Examples in such things as they did, upon general and common Reasons, which concern us as well as them, or we are not obliged at all by any Example ; and if so, then those Rea-
sons are our Rule, to which we are to reduce their Examples. Without we find some general or common Reason

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* Gillesp. against Cerem. p. 339.

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Reason, we have no Warrant (according to their own Principle) to follow their Examples, and when such Reasons do appear, then it's not the Example alone that obliges us, but Reason that approves the Example. To bring their own Rule to the Case in hand; How do they know but our Lord was moved to sit at the Sacrament by special Reasons drawn from that Time and Place, from the Feast of the Passover, to which that Gesture was peculiar? How do they know, but that our Lord might have used another Gesture, if the Sacrament had been instituted apart from the Passover?

The Necessity of the Time made the *Jews* eat the Passover after one Fashion in *Egypt*, which afterward ceasing, gave occasion to alter it in *Canaan*; and how do we know, but that our Lord complied with the present Necessity, and that his Example (if he did Sit) was only Temporary, and not designed for a Standing Law, perpetually obliging to a like Practice? If Christ acted upon special Reasons, then we are not obliged, by their own Rule; and if he did not, let them produce the Reasons if they can, which make this Example of Christ of general and perpetual Use, and to oblige all Christians to follow it. When ever they do this, I am sure they will expose their own Principle, which they have built so much upon, to the Scorn and Contempt of the World, which is this: **That the bare Example of Christ and good Men in Scripture, are a compleat Rule and sufficient Warrant for our Actions, in such things as we have no Precept or Prohibition for in the Word of God: That a Christian's Duty, in a great measure, flows purely from Examples recorded in the Word of God, and not from the express Laws of God which he hath revealed to us.*

4. It's absurd to talk of Christ's Example apart from all Law and Rule, and to make that alone a

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Principle

* Gillesp. 338. disp. against Cerem.

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Principle of Duty distinct from the Precepts of the Gospel, because Christ himself, all the while the World enjoyed the benefit of his Example, governed his Actions by a Law: For if we consider him as a Man, like unto us in all things, (Sin only excepted) he was born under the Obligation of the Moral and Natural Law, as a Jew under the *Mosaic Law*: As the *Messias* sent of God into the World, to compass the great Work of our Redemption, which he had freely undertaken, he still acted by Divine Appointment, and was under the Gospel Law. He came to fulfil all Righteousness, and to teach us the whole Mind and Will of God, and exemplifie to us what he taught and delivered. That which made *that bitter and deadly Cup**, which ended his Days, relish with him, was this Consideration, that it was a Cup given him by his Father†, and the Drinking it was agreeable to his Will, and it was the Comfort and Support of his Soul a little before his Death, that he had finished the Work that his Father had given him. He frequently professed in his life-time, that he did as his Father gave him Commandment, and that it was his great Business and Delight to do the Will of his Father||; and many such Expressions he used, which may be consulted at leisure. If therefore we only look to his Example, without considering the various Capacities and Relations he bare, both towards God and towards us, and the several Laws by which he stood bound, which were the measures of his Actions, we shall miserably mistake our way, and bewilder our selves; we shall act like Fools, when we do such things as he did pursuant to infinite Wisdom. Thus (to give but one instance) if we should subject our selves to the

* John. 18. 11. † Joh. 17. 4. v. || Mat. 11. 27. Luke 2. 49. Joh. 4. 34. Joh. 5. 30. 8. c. 28, 29. Joh. 10. 25. Joh. 14. 24, 31. Joh. 15. 10, 15.

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the Law of *Moses* as he did (for he fulfilled the Ceremonial Law, which he came to abolish) we should thereby frustrate the great Design of the Gospel, and of our Saviour's coming into the World: And yet even this we are obliged to do, if his Example alone be a sufficient Warrant for our Actions. I have staid the longer upon this Head, because so ill a use hath been made of Scripture Examples, and and to shew how far forth we may safely steer by them. I scarce know any one Doctrine so teeming and big with Error, so fatal to the Souls of private Persons, and the Peace of Publick Societies both Civil and Ecclesiastical, *as that which teaches us to learn and derive our Duty from, and to judge of the Goodness and Badness of our Actions by the Examples of Christ and good Men, over and above what we are obliged to do by the Precepts and Laws of the Gospel.*

3. They who urge the Example of Christ against Kneeling at the Sacrament, as our Rule to which we ought to conform, do not follow it themselves; because the Posture he instituted the Sacrament in, which they say was a Passover-Gesture, was (if so) very different from that which they so earnestly plead for, and use at this day: for that was a Discumbing or Leaning Gesture, on the left Side, much after the manner that we lye upon Couches, with the upper part of the Body almost erect. It is agreed by all Learned Men, that this was the ancient Custom of the *Jews* in our Saviour's time, and is so to this day at the Passover, by which Gesture they distinguish this Festival Night from all others. Now, if the same Gesture were used by Christ at the Sacrament as was at the Passover, and his Example makes it necessary and obligatory to all Christians, for what Reasons, and by what Authority do our Dissenting Brethren change it into *Sitting* upright, according to our Civil way and manner of Feasting? When they tell us this, it will be very

easie to justify Kneeling by the same Authority which they shall alledge for Sitting, and our changing the Gesture will be as warrantable as theirs: Unless they will say that they alone have the Power and Priviledge to recede from the Example of Christ when and how far they please, but our Church hath not, nor any other upon the Face of the Earth. To say sitting, as they do, comes nearer to the Gesture used by our Lord at the Passover, and consequently (as is supposed) at the Sacrament, then the Kneeling Gesture according to the Custom of our Church, will do them no Service: For there is no room for this Question, who cometh nearest to the Example, they or we? when they ought not at all to vary if they keep to their own Rule. The Example of Christ, as it is urged by them against Kneeling, equally concludes against all other Gestures, besides what he himself used: And then the supposed Gesture which he observed binds to lying along. For where we have nothing to go by but his Pattern we must cut exactly by it, or else we take a liberty to do that of our own heads for which we have no allowance: That is, we leave the Pattern which we were obliged only to follow, and act at random upon our own heads, and then the Pattern cannot be alledg'd for our Justification. Though our Church therefore doth not strictly follow the Example of Christ (as is objected) by requiring all her Communicants to kneel, yet they have no reason to complain and to scruple Communicating with us, who do not follow it themselves, but receive the Sacrament in their separate Congregations in a Gesture different from what our Lord used at the first Institution of it. The *Presbyterians* (if one may argue from their Practices to their Principles) lay very little stress on this Argument taken from the Example of Christ: For though they generally choose to Sit, yet they do not condemn Standing as sinful, or unlawful

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in it self, and several were willing to receive it in that Posture in our Churches, which surely is every whit as wide from the Pattern our Lord is supposed to have set us, (whether he lay along or late upright) as that which is enjoined and practised by the Church of *England*. There is too a confessed variation allowed of and practised by the generality of Dissenters, both Presbyterians and Independents, from the Institution and Practice of Christ and his Apostles, in the other Sacrament of Baptism. For they have changed Immersion or Dipping, into Aspersion or Sprinkling, and pouring Water on the Face. * Baptism by Immersion or Dipping is suitable to the Institution of our Lord and the Practice of his Apostles, and was by them ordained and used to represent our Burial with Christ, a Death unto Sin, and a New Birth unto Righteousness, as *St. Paul* explains that Rite. Now 'tis very strange that Kneeling at the Lord's Supper (though a different Gesture from that which was used at the first Institution) should become a Stumbling-block in the way of Weak and Tender Consciences, that it's more unpassable than the *Alps*; and yet they can with Ease and Cheerfulness pass by as great or a greater Change in the Sacrament of Baptism, and Christen as we do, without the least murmur or complaint. Sitting, Kneeling, or Standing, were none of them instituted or used to signify and represent any thing essential to the Lord's Supper, as Dipping all over was; why cannot Kneeling then be without any wrong to the Conscience, as safely and innocently used as Sprinkling? How comes a Gnat (to use our Saviour's Proverb,) to be harder to swallow than a Camel? Or why should not the Peace and Unity of

* Mat. 3. 16. Mat. 28. 19. Rom. 6. 46. 11. Col. 2. 12.

of the Church, and Charity to the Publick, prevail with them to kneel at the Lord's Supper, as much (or rather more) as Mercy and Tenderneſs to the Infant's Body, to ſprinkle or pour Water on the Face, contrary to the firſt Inſtitution.

4. They who Kneel at the Sacrament in compliance with the Cuſtoms and Conſtitutions of the Church, whereof they are Members, do manifeſtly follow the Example of Chriſt.

For our Saviour complied with that Paſſover Geſture which was at that time commonly and generally obſerved by the *Jews*, but cannot be pretended to be the ſame that was uſed at the firſt Inſtitution of that Eaſt in *Egypt*. For thus the Command runs, *Exod. 12. 11. And thus ſhall ye eat it ; with your Loyns girded, your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your hand : And you ſhall eat it in haſte, it is the Lord's Paſſover.* This, ſay the *Hebrew Doctors*, was but a temporary Law, ſuited to the neceſſity of that time, and ſerved for that Night only, and did not oblige the following Generations in the Land of *Canaan*. For thus they comment upon it : Four things were contained in this Law, which did not oblige but for that Night at the Paſſover in *Egypt**. 1. Eating of the Lamb in their Houſes diſperſed in *Egypt*. 2. Taking up of the Lamb from the tenth Day. 3. Striking the Blood on their Door-Posts. 4. Eating in Haſte. Here the Geſture in all probability was Standing, though it be not expreſſly mentioned : Howſoever it was different from that uſed by the *Jews* in our Saviour's time, which was a Geſture denoting Eaſe and Reſt, and their Deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage : And our Lord's Compliance with this Cuſtom may teach us thus much, that we ſhould not be ſcrupulous about Geſtures, but conform

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* Vi. M. Ainfworth *Exod. 12. 6. 11.*

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to the innocent and prevailing Customs of the Church wheresoever we live. To this Practice St. Paul's Rule well suits; not only, *Whatsoever things are True, and Just, and Lovely, and Pure, and Honest,* but, *whatsoever things are of good Report, (i. e. well spoken of or laudable)* Phil. 4. 8. Not only *If there be any vertue, but if there be any praise* * (if any thing be much approved of in common Esteem, or is made commendable by Custom) we are to think (or make account of these things) and conform our Practice to them. And if Christians, in their several Places of their Abode did walk according to this Rule, they would greatly promote the Peace and Welfare of the Church of Christ, and in so doing procure Quiet and Peace to themselves, with unspeakable Comfort and Satisfaction. Whosoever would be esteemed and rewarded as a Peace-maker †, and avoid the ill Reputation and Guilt of a Turbulent Person, ought, among other things, carefully to observe this, *viz.* to submit to and comply with the Innocent Customs of the Church, whereof he is a Member. For thus the same Divine Writer (after he had argued against Womens being uncovered in the publick Assemblies) concludes all after this manner: *If any Man seem to be Contentious, we have no such Customs, nor the Churches of God,* 1 Cor. 11. 6. Pray, by the way, let this be observed from this place, That we may lawfully do some things in the Worship and Service of God, for which we have no Command or Example for in Scripture, or else St. Paul's Argument from Custom is of no force.

To sum up all upon this Second Query: Seeing that we can never be certain of the particular Gesture used by Christ, at the Institution of the Holy Sacrament: Seeing his bare Example (supposing he did

* *Εὐφημία. ἢ πρὸς πᾶσι* Θ. λογισθε. † Matt. 5. 9.

did Sit) doth not oblige us in Conscience to imitate it : Seeing they who urge his Example do not follow it themselves, even in that Particular they urge it for : Seeing Conformity to the Gesture prescribed by Law, is a plain Conformity to the Example and Practice of Christ, considered as to the Equity, Reason, and Spiritual Meaning and Instruction of it. I think no Man can reasonably object against Kneeling, and scruple in Conscience a Conformity to it, as being repugnant to the Example of our Lord.

QUERY III.

Whether Kneeling be not altogether unsuitable and repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, as being no Table Gesture ?

BEFORE I proceed to the Case it self, it will be requisite to premise something which may explain the true Sense of it; and discover upon what Grounds and Reasons our Dissenting Brethren build their Scruples against Kneeling, as being no Table Gesture. By a Table Gesture we are to understand thus much; that at the Lord's Supper we ought in their Judgment to use the same Gestures as we do at our ordinary Meals and Tables, at our Civil Feasts and Entertainments: And because divers Gestures are used at Meals, according to the different Modes and Customs of several Nations, therefore we are obliged to use that at the Sacrament which the Custom of our Country hath prescribed at our Ordinary and Civil Meals. Thus saith the Author of **Altare Damascenum*,

* Disput. against Kneeling, p. 2. p. 56. Arg. 4. Abridgment, p. 61. Reply to Bp. Morton 3 Inno. Cer. p. 37. Set forth in King James's Reign.

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num, a Stout and Learned Chanpion for a Table Gesture, *Sitting cross-legg'd as the Turks do at their Meals, would be amongst them (if they were converted) a comely fashon of Receiving the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament is a Supper, a Feast, a Banquet, and therefore requires a Supper, a Feast, a Banquet Gesture. And such a Gesture must be used as standeth with the Custom of the Country. In no Nation was it ever held comely to Kneel at their Banquets, or to receive their Food Kneeling. So that according to the Sense of their own Writers, and great Patrons of sitting, this is the reason why they question the Lawfulness of Kneling: That the Gesture at the Lord's Table ought to be the same with that which we use and observe at our Ordinary Tables, according to the Custom and Fashion of our Native Country wherein we live.*

And then the full import and meaning of the Query is this: *Whether the Nature of the Sacrament, considered as a Feast, doth not require and oblige us to Sit and not Kneel, because Sitting and not Kneeling is the ordinary Table Gesture, according to the Mode and Fashion of England.*

Here the Reader may observe, that this Argument for Sitting, drawn from the Nature of this Holy Feast, quite overthrows the two former Arguments drawn from the expresse Command and Example of our Saviour, and renders them useless and unserviceable to their Cause.

I. For they don't say we are obliged to use the same Gesture with our Lord, but only a Table Gesture, though never so different from that which he used, according to the Custom of our Country where we live. Various Gestures, according to the variety of Fashions and Usages of several Nations at their Common Feasts, may be all comely and suitable to the Nature of this Holy Feast: According

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to this Argument, therefore we are not obliged to Sit, because Christ did at the Sacrament, and then his bare Example is no Rule to us in this matter. His Example was governed and guided by the Nature of the Sacrament, and the Custom of the *Jews*.

Our Lord instituted the Sacrament before the Paschal Feast was over, and he continued in the same Posture which he used at the Passover, say they, and that was Sitting. Suppose this, what follows? Why therefore we are bound to Sit too after his Example. No, by no means, say I, unless it be the Custom of our Country to sit at our Meals, and Sitting be our Common Table Gesture: Which is the strength of this Argument, drawn from the Nature of the thing, if we may believe what they say themselves.

2. Again, if the Nature of the Sacrament require a Table-Gesture, and we are obliged to use that in particular which standeth with the Custom of our Country, and the Gestures may be different, according as their Customs differ, then God hath no where commanded the use of any particular Gesture, nor obliged all Christians in all Places to observe one and the same.

3. And then Thirdly, we may lawfully observe some things in the Worship of God, for which we have no Command or Example in the Holy Scriptures, if this Argument of the Table Gesture be good. And this Principle, *viz.* that we ought not to do any thing in the Worship of God, but what we have some Command or Example for in Scripture, is the great battering Engine which hath been constantly employed against the Ceremonies enjoined by our Church; and it is a Principle wherein the *Mystery of Puritanism doth consist*, as Bishop * *Sander-son*

* Preface to his Sermon, last Edit. 1681.

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son notes. Therefore it behoves our Brethren not to be fond of this Table Gesture, as they love the Life of their Cause. I am sure no greater Argument can be afforded of a routed baffled Cause in the matter of Sitting at the Sacrament, than to see the Patrons of it running up and down in Confusion, and flying for Refuge sometime to the Command of Christ, then to his Example; when driven out there, then to the Nature of the thing and Civil Customs, and about again to the Example: For thus the Authors of the forementioned Tracts do. Thus much being premised, I proceed to consider the Question proposed, for the Resolution whereof I shall,

1. Enquire into the Nature of the Holy Sacrament; that so we may truly understand what Gesture is agreeable or repugnant to it.

2. Shew that the Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not absolutely require, and necessarily oblige us to observe a Common Table Gesture, in order to our worthy Receiving.

3. That Kneeling is very comely and agreeable to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, tho' no Table Gesture.

4. That the Primitive Church and Ancient Fathers had no such Notion of the Necessity of a Table Gesture, as is maintained and urged by Dissenters.

1. As to the Nature of the Sacrament, I shall endeavour to discover it under these following Heads.

First, The Sacrament in the Holy Scripture is called the Lord's Table, and the Lord's Supper, and a Feast and Banquet by the Ancient *Greek* Fathers, because of that Provision and Entertainment which our Lord hath made for all worthy Receivers. It is stiled a *Supper* and a *Feast*, either because it was instituted by Christ at Supper-time, at Night, or because it represents a *Supper* and a *Feast*: And so it is not

not in the same Nature with a Civil and Ordinary *Supper* and *Feast*, though it bear the same name. There is some resemblance between this Holy Feast and Civil Feasts, and the shewing wherein it lyes, will in part explain its Nature. There are three things essential and necessary to a Feast, and included in the Notion of it, *Plenty*, *Good Company*, and *Mirth*; and upon the account of these the Sacrament is (considered in its own Nature) properly a Banquet, a Feast, but then it is a Heavenly and Spiritual one, consisting of Spiritual Graces and Benefits, Communion with Christ and with all true Believers, signified by, and tendered under the outward Elements of Bread and Wine, and even in these three Particulars which are essential to it, consider'd as a Feast, and are necessary Ingredients into all Feasts whatsoever, it very much differs from Civil and Ordinary Feasts: For though there be *Plenty*, yet it doth not consist of Variety of Dishes to gratifie our Palates, or satisfie our Hunger, as other Feasts do, and particularly the Passover did, where the Body was filled and feasted as well as the Mind. The Provision wherewith our Lord hath furnished out his Table is not of an Earthly and Perishing, but of an Heavenly and Immortal Nature, even the Body and Blood of Christ, which we spiritually Feast upon.

Alas, if we only fix our Eyes and Thoughts upon what is placed on the Table, and those small Portions of Bread and Wine allotted us to Eat and Drink, without lifting up our Hearts (as our Church exhorts us to do by the Minister in her Communion Office*) to those Heavenly and Invisible good Things, couched under and signified by the
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* So St. Cyp. St. Chrysost. and St. Aug. expound this Exhort. of the Minister at the Communion, Cyp. de Orat. Dom. Chrys. Hom. de Enceniis, Aug. de ver. Relig. c. 3.

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outward Elements of Bread and Wine, what is there in all that we see, that deserves the name of a Feast, or can by the help of any Figure (but an Irony) be called by that Name. Did ever any Man esteem that a Feast, where there was not Meat enough to fill his Mouth, nor Drink enough to quench his Thirst? It is upon the account therefore of those Invisible and Spiritual good Things, wherewith the Souls, not the Bodies of worthy Communicants, are strengthened and refreshed (of which the Bread and Wine are but the Types and Shadows) that the Sacrament is, and may truly be called a *Feast* or *Banquet*. And for this Reason* the Greek Fathers called it a *Spiritual Feast*, and the Table a *Mystical Table*, and the Cup the *Cup of Mysteries*, and the Sacrament, take it all together, was by them stiled the *Mystical Supper*, the *Mystery*, and *Mysteries*, as presenting one Thing to the Eye, and another to the Mind.

2. As Plenty is one necessary Ingredient into the nature of a Feast, so also is Choice and Select Company. Feasts are made in Expectation of Friends and Acquaintance. A Man may Dine alone, but in proper and ordinary Speech no Man is said to Feast alone. Now, though the Sacrament doth resemble our Common Feasts in this Particular (and therefore hath obtained the name of *Communion*, and the Guests *Communicants*, which Phrases do naturally import Number or Society) yet if we consider what the Persons are that constitute this Society, and with whom Communion is held, the Nature of this Spiritual Feast will further appear.

And truly our Communion is with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the three Divine Persons of the Holy Trinity, though principally our

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† St. Chrys. in Ps. 90. Greg. Naz. orat. 40. Athanasius, St. Crys. Jer. Catich. and others.

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Lord Jesus, the Master of this Feast, in and through whom we all have access by one Spirit to the Father, as *St. Paul* speaks, *Eph. 2. 18.* This high and inestimable Privilege and Honour of being admitted into the Presence of God, and holding a Friendly Correspondence and Converse with him at his Table, is founded on the Blood of Christ, which we thankfully commemorate at this Solemnity, *by which we who are afar off are made nigh, Eph. 2. 13.* as the same Divine Writer hath it. Moreover, by eating and drinking at the Lord's Table we are united to, and hold Communion with all Faithful Christians and worthy Communicants, the Members of his Mystical Body the Church, whom he hath redeemed and cleansed by his most precious Blood : And that which qualifies a Man for such Communion, doth not consist in external Garbs or Ornaments of the Body, but in holy and virtuous Dispositions of Soul, in a *penitent, humble, charitable, thankful, and obedient Heart.*

3. Another Thing necessary to a Feast is Mirth and Joy, (which implies also good Discourse) and in this too the Sacrament, resembles our common Feasts. But then the Joy is of a Spiritual Nature, and flows from different Causes.

Not from what we taste and see, not from our Appetites and Fancies pleased and tickled with the Richness and Variety of Dishes which adorn the Table, nor from our Blood and Spirits raised and fermented by generous Wines, but from Divine and Heavenly Considerations. From the boundless and unaccountable Love of God in sending his only begotten and beloved Son into the World, to lay down his Life, and shed his Blood, as a Propitiation for our Sins ; from the wonderful Condescension of our Dear Lord and Master, in undertaking this hard Task, in appearing clothed with our Flesh, in the Form of a Servant, and at last humbling himself to the

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the Death of the Cross for our sakes ; from the Victory he hath gained for us over Death and Hell, and all the Spirits of Darkness ; from the miraculous Redemption he hath wrought, and the Right and Title to Eternal Life, which he hath purchased for us sinful Dust and Ashes, by his own most precious Blood. This is the secret Language and Discourse of every devout Christian at this Holy Feast, and with these kind of Meditations he refreshes and delights himself. So that from the whole we may conclude, that the Lord's Supper is in its own Nature truly and properly a Feast, though vastly different from Common and Ordinary Feasts throughout, even in those Things wherein it seems to be like them. As to the several Names and Phrases by which the Nature of it is described, they are figurative, and borrowed from Civil Entertainments ; but although it hath received the same Names, and is represented by Phrases that properly suit to Ordinary Feasts, yet the Lord's Supper differs in its Nature from Civil Banquets as much as Heaven and Earth, Body and Spirit differ in theirs. As to the Bread and Wine which we see and taste, they are only Signs and Types of the true Spiritual Feast, and serve to raise our Minds to, and whet the Appetites of our Souls after Celestial and Heavenly Enjoyments. Thus much may suffice to inform us what the Nature of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is, considered barely as a Feast.

2. For a further Discovery of its Nature, we are to be minded, that it is a Feast upon a Sacrifice for Sin, 1 Cor. 12. 26. wherein we are particularly to commemorate the Death of Christ by way of Expiation for the Sins of the World.

3. It was instituted in Honour of our Lord, our great Benefactor and Redeemer, where we meet to preserve an eternal Memory of his wondrous Works, to bless and praise him, and speak good of his Name.

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And thus partaking of the Lord's Supper is a proper Act of Christian Worship performed to our Saviour. It's the *Worship of God* manifested in our Flesh, and of our Crucified Lord, who submitted himself to a Vile and Tormenting Death, for the sake of us Vile and Miserable Sinners.

4. The Lord's Supper is a Mysterious Rite of *Religious Worship*, which as it respects God the Father, hath the Vertue and Efficacy of a Thanksgiving and a Prayer, as the Sacrifices under the Law had; for our Desires and Affections may be signified by *Actions* as well as *Words*, and by *Ceremonies* as well as *Speech*: And with respect to this Notion and End of the Lord's Supper, it was anciently stiled the *Liturgy*, and the *Eucharist*, which last Name as it was given to it in the most * early Ages of the Church, so it still retains the same among all the Christian Churches to this Day.

5. The Lord's Supper was Instituted to be a Federal or Covenanting Rite between God and all worthy Communicants †; where, by permitting us to eat and drink at his Table, he signifies, that we are in a State of Peace and Friendship, and in a Covenant-relation with him, and we by coming to his Table, and eating and drinking in his Presence, do own him to be our God and Saviour, and in effect plight our Troth to him, and swear Fidelity and Allegiance to him; we take the Sacrament upon it (as we ordinarily say) that we will not henceforth live unto our selves, but to him alone that Dyed for us, and gave himself for us an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling Savour.

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* Ig 1st. Ep. ad Ephes. Justin Mart. in Dial. cum Tryph.

† Luke 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24.

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6. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was instituted for this further End, *viz. to be a Means to convey and apply to us the Merits of that Sacrifice which Christ offered for Sinners on the Cross, and as a Pledge to assure us thereof.*

7. It was Instituted to be a Sacred Bond of Unity and Concord among all Christians, to engage and dispose us to love one another, as our Lord loved us, who thought not his Life too dear, nor his Blood too much to part with for our Sakes.

This is a short, and so far as it serves my present Design, a full Account of the Nature of the Lord's Supper. If the *Reader* desire to see these Things (which I have but touched upon) more largely proved and explained, let him for his satisfaction consult those two excellent Discourses (among many others) that pass under these Names, * *viz.* 1. *The Christian Sacrifice*; 2. *Discourse of Religious Assemblies.*

Howsoever, by what hath been said it appears, that the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is of a complicated Nature, and instituted for various Ends; that it is vastly different both in its Nature and Ends from Civil and Ordinary Feasts: And therefore I conclude, that we are not at this Religious Feast to guide our selves by the Rules of Common Table Fellowship, but by more Religious and Spiritual Considerations. Which leads me to the Second Thing proposed for the Resolution of the present Case.

2. That the Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not absolutely require and necessarily oblige us to observe a Table-Gesture, in order to a right and worthy

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* Set forth by 1. Dr. Patrick, 2. Dr. Sherlock.

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worthy Receiving of it. The Reasons that I shall offer for the Proof of this are these :

1. If the Nature of the Sacrament considered as a Feast necessarily requires a Table Gesture, then the Nature of the Sacrament considered as a Feast, equally concludes for all other Formalities which are either Essential to all Civil Feasts whatsoever, or to all Feasts as they obtain among us. For if Sitting be necessary, purely because the Nature of the Feast requires it, then all other Circumstances which the Nature of a Feast requires, will be equally necessary too. But our Dissenting Brethren will by no means allow of this, nor think themselves obliged to observe all other Formalities, though equally suitable and agreeable to the Nature of a Feast, as Sitting is: Though for what good reason I am perfectly in the dark. For, 1. as they omit many things at the Sacrament that are as agreeable to the Nature of a Feast, as the Table-Gesture is, So they observe several Modes and Circumstances which are not agreeable to the Nature of a Feast, as the Custom of our Country standeth. For instance; at our common and ordinary Feasts it's very suitable and agreeable to Laugh, to Talk and Discourse together, to Congratulate one another's Welfare, to enquire of the State of absent Friends and Acquaintance, to sit with the Head covered, to eat plentifully and drink frequently, to carve and drink to one another. It is further necessary and convenient that at such Feasts the Guests should be well attended with Servants and Waiters, who are not allowed to sit down at the Table with those who are invited. It's agreeable that the Guests should, if they please, help themselves and their Friends where they like: And yet these (and many other things of this nature) though very suitable to, and commonly practised at our ordinary Feasts, are not allowed of, nor practised by, nor urged as necessary to be observed at

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the Sacrament by our Dissenting Brethren. But why they should plead for and urge the Necessity of a Common Table-Gesture, as being agreeable to the Nature of a Feast or Banquet, and at the same time think there lies no Necessity at all upon them to observe other Formalities equally agreeable to the Nature of Civil Feasts, and warranted by Custom as much as Sitting, is the great Knot of the Question, and that which puzzles me, I confess, to untie.

2. They observe several Modes and Circumstances at the Sacrament which are not agreeable to the Nature of a Feast or Supper, nor to the Customary way of Feasting among us. For Example ; The Sacrament (say they) is a Feast, a Supper, and requires a Feast, a Supper-Gesture ; and then too (say I) it requires a Supper-Time. It is called in Scripture *the Lord's Supper*, and it was instituted the same Night in which he was betrayed, and it's clear that our Lord administered it at Even, and that late, at the close of the Paschal Feast. Now the Nature of a Supper, according to common Use and Acceptation, requires the Evening or Night, as the proper or peculiar Season for it, and yet our Dissenting Brethren make no scruple of communicating at Noon.

It's not agreeable to the Nature of a Feast, that one of the Guests, and the principal one too, should fill out the Wine, and break the Bread, and distribute it to the rest of the Society ; but this the Dissenters generally allow of and Practise at the Holy Communion. It's not agreeable to the Nature of a Feast to sit from the Table, dispersed up and down the Room. In all Publick Feasts there are several Tables provided, when one is not big enough to receive the Guests, and yet the Dissenters generally receive it in their Pews, scattered up and down the Church, and think one Table is sufficient, though not

capable of receiving the twentieth part of the Communicants in some large Parishes and numerous Assemblies: And where they are few in number that they may come up to, and sit at the Table, they are generally against it (especially the Presbyterians) and think they are not obliged to observe that Formality, though constantly practised at Common and Civil Entertainments. It's by no means agreeable to the Nature of a Feast to be Sorrowful, To mourn and grieve at a Feast is as indecent and unsuitable as to laugh at a Funeral. But sure our Dissenting Brethren will not say, that to come to the Sacrament with a penitent and a broken Spirit, to come with a hearty Sorrow for all our Sins, which caused much Pain and Torment to our dearest and greatest Friend, our ever blessed Redeemer: To reflect upon the Agonies of his Soul in the Garden, the Bitterness of his deadly Cup, the Torture he endured on the Cross, with a deep Sympathy and Trouble for the Occasion, they will not surely, I say, affirm that such a Disposition of Heart and Mind, is improper and unsuitable to the Nature of this Holy Feast which we solemnize in Commemoration of his Death for our Sakes. I make no doubt but all Pious Dissenters bring along with them to the Sacrament such a Temper, but this they ought not to do if their Rule hold good, *viz.* That at this Feast we ought to be guided by the Rules of common Table-Fellowship.

2. The Nature of the Lord's Supper doth not necessarily require a common Table-Gesture, because it's not of the same Nature with common and ordinary Feasts. It is very ill Logick, as well as ill Divinity, to argue from Natural and Civil Things to Spiritual, to conclude that because they agree in their Names, they are of the same Nature: For example; When any Man, who hath led a loose, sensual, wicked Life, is awakened and excited by the Grace of
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 God,

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God, to consider and take up, to mind Heavenly Things, and to breathe after God, and Christ, and Eternity ; to alter his Mind and his Manners, and lead quite another Life from what he did before ; this Person is in Scripture phrase said to be Regenerate and Born again. But if we would go about to judge of the true Nature of Regeneration and the new Birth purely by the Correspondency it holds with the natural Birth, and argue from the Natural to the Spiritual, we should entertain very gross and silly Conceptions of Regeneration, and greatly mistake the Nature of it. How ridiculous would it be to prescribe the same Rules to be observed by a New Convert or a New-born Babe in a Spiritual Sense, in order to his spiritual Nourishment and Growth in Grace, as are prescribed and practised towards Infants and New-born Babes in a Natural Sense, for the Maintenance and Preservation of their Natural Life and Strength ; as that they should be swathed, and enter into a Milk Diet. And yet this is every way as reasonable as to prescribe Sitting as necessary to the worthy Receiving of the Sacrament, which is a Spiritual Feast, because it's agreeable to the Nature of Civil Feasts : Or (which amounts to the same thing) because it's called a Feast, therefore it's of the same Nature with ordinary and common Feasts, and consequently such a Gesture and Behaviour as is necessary and requisite to these, is also requisite and necessary to the Lord's Supper.

3. The Nature of the Lord's Supper considered as a Feast, doth not necessarily require and oblige us to use a common Table-Gesture, in order to right and worthy Receiving, because in the Judgement and Practice of numerous Dissenters it may be worthily received Standing. Thus the Presbyterians (and all their Writers who have engaged against Kneeling) do not condemn Standing as sinful and unlawful ; nor esteem such as use it unworthy Receivers on that account,

account, and yet Standing is no common Table-Gesture.

Object. If any should yet urge the Necessity of Sitting as the only agreeable Gesture to the Nature of the Sacrament considered as a Feast, and that to use any other Gesture would prophane the Ordinance.

Answ. I offer this to be considered as a good Answer, that the Passover was * called a Feast by God himself who instituted it, and yet he commanded the Children of *Israel* to celebrate it in *Egypt* after this manner, *with their Loins girt, their Shoes on their Feet, and their Staff in their Hands*: All Signs of haste indeed, but no Feast or Table-Gestures either among the *Jews* or the *Egyptians*. To say that God enjoyned Gestures unsuitable to the Nature of that Ordinance, is to call in question the Wisdom, and the Knowledge, and the Truth of God, as not acting upon a right understanding of, and in Conformity to the true Nature of Things; it's all one as to suppose that God, after he had created a reasonable Creature, would injoin him to do something that was disagreeable to his Nature and Reason. On the other hand to say, that the Feast of the Passover did in its Nature admit of several Gestures, is to yield all that I desire; for then the Sacrament, considered as a Feast, will admit of several too, and consequently doth not oblige us to observe only a Feast Gesture for the due Celebration of it.

3. *Kneeling is very comely and agreeable to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, though no Table-Gesture.* Which I hope will be made evident to every honest and unbiassed Mind (which impartially seeks after Truth) by these following Considerations:

1. Kneeling is allowed on all hands to be a very fit and suitable Gesture for Prayer and Praise, and
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* Exod. 12. 14. vers. 11.

I. Part I. *Of Kneeling at the Sacrament.* 123

very apt to express our Reverence, Humility and Gratitude by, and consequently very fit to be used at the Holy Sacrament and agreeable to its Nature. This will appear if we reflect upon what hath been delivered concerning the Nature and Ends of the Lord's Supper. For at the Sacrament we express that by Actions (as I hinted before) which at other times we do by Words, and the Lord's Supper is a Solemn Rite of Christian Worship, which implies Prayer and Praise. It includes all the Parts of Prayer. By partaking of the Signs of his Body broken, and Blood shed for our Sins, we do commemorate, represent and shew forth to God the Father the Sacrifice which his dearly beloved Son made upon the Cross; we feast upon the Memorials of the great Sin-Offering: And in so doing we make an open Confession and Acknowledgment of our Guilt and Unworthiness to God, and we plead with him in the Vertue of his Son's Blood which was shed for us, for the Pardon and Remission of all our Sins. We further humbly entreat him to be Propitious and Favourable to us, and to bestow upon us all those Benefits which our Lord purchased with his most precious Blood.

We interceed with him too at the Communion for the whole Church, that all our fellow Christians and true Members of his Body may receive Remission of their Sins, and all other Benefits of his Passion. And as Eating and Drinking at his Table, is a visible and powerful Prayer in the sight of God; so it is a visible Act of Praise and Thanksgiving, whereby we let our Heavenly Father see that we retain a deep and lively Sense of his unexpressible Love, in sending his only begotten Son into the World to die for us that we might live through him. And that which enlivens our Faith, and emboldens our Hopes of finding Favour and Acceptance at his Hands at this time above others, is this, *viz.* our Prayers and Praises

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Praises are not only put up in the Name of Christ, but presented, and as it were writ in his Blood, and offered to God over the great Propitiatory Sacrifice. All this our Actions signifie and speak when we eat the Consecrated Bread, and drink the Cup of Blessing at the Lord's Table. If therefore these Things be true (and I think no Body who understands what he doth when he partakes of the Lord's Supper will gainsay it) then Kneeling must be judged as sitting and convenient to be used at such a time, when we signifie our Desires and Affections by external Rites and Ceremonies of God's Appointment, as when we do it by Words, that is, when we say our Prayers.

2. Our Dissenting Brethren (and all good Christians) will grant that our blessed Saviour ought to be worship'd and adored by all worthy Communicants, inwardly in their Hearts and Souls, when they receive the Tokens and Pledges of his tender and exceeding great Love in laying down his Life for the Sins of the whole World. And if so, then whatsoever is very apt and meet to express the inward Esteem and Veneration of our Minds by, can't be thought unsuitable and repugnant to the Nature of the Lord's Supper. Because that is a Religious Feast instituted in honour of our Lord, and is a solemn Act of Christian Worship performed to our crucified Saviour. Our meeting together at this Holy Feast in Obedience to his Commands to commemorate his Death, and tell of all his wondrous Works, to perpetuate the Fame of our great Benefactor (as much as in us lies) throughout all Ages, is an external Mark of the Honour and Respect we bear towards him in our Minds, and is, properly speaking, that which we call Publick Worship. Since to bow our Knees then, is allowed to be a proper mode of Publick Worship, and an external Sign of Reverence, why should an adoring Posture be thought

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unmeet and unsuitable to the Sacrament, which in its Nature imports Worship and Adoration.

3. No good Christian, of what Party or Perswasion soever, will deny but that to lift up our Hands and Eyes to Heaven, and to employ our Tongues in uttering the Praises of our blessed Redeemer, even in the Act of Receiving, is very agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament; why then should kneeling be thought unsuitable, which is no more but only glorifying God and our blessed Saviour with another Part of our Body? Why should the Gesture be scrupled at more than the Voice, or the bowing of my Knees be esteemed incongruous and unfitting any more than moving my Tongue, or raising my Hands and Eyes to Heaven? Especially if we consider, that the high Degree of Honour and Glory to which our Lord is advanced in the Heavens by God the Father, as the Reward of his humble and submissive Obedience here on Earth, challenges from us all manner of Respect and Reverence both of Soul and Body: *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, &c. and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Phil. 2. 8, 9, 10, 11.

4. The Holy Sacrament was instituted in remembrance of our blessed Saviour's Death and Sufferings: And therefore I request all our Dissenting Brethren to consult one place of Scripture concerning our Saviour's bodily Gesture or Deportment in the Heat and Extremity of his Passion, wherein he presented himself before his Father in his Agony and Bloody Sweat in the Garden. *Being in an Agony* he offered up this Prayer to his Father, *If thou be willing remove this Cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.* Luk. 24, 42, 44. But after what manner, or in what
Gesture

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Gesture of Body did his perplexed Soul utter these earnest Supplications? *Why, kneeling or fixing his knees upon the earth**. Now though we may remember and meditate on our Saviour's Sufferings in the Garden when his Soul was so exceeding sorrowful, when he was reduced to such a weak and low Estate as to stand in need of Comfort and Support from an Angel†; though, I say, this may be done sitting, yet sure no sober and considering Mind, will say that to celebrate the Memory of these Sufferings with bended Knees (as his were) on the Earth, is an improper and unsuitable Behaviour to be used at the Sacrament, where our proper Work is to commemorate the Death and Sufferings of our Saviour, and particularly these among the rest.

5. The Sacrament was instituted to be a Means of receiving the Benefits of his Death and Passion, and a Pledge to assure us thereof. If we do but consider what invaluable Blessings we expect to receive by our worthy partaking of the Consecrated Bread and Wine at the Table of our Lord, (such as the Forgiveness of all our Sins, the plentiful Communications of his Grace and Spirit, and a Right and Title to Eternal Life) we can't think Kneeling an unmeet and unbecoming Gesture in the Act of Receiving the outward Signs and Pledges of this Inward and Invisible Grace. If a grateful hearty Sense of God's infinite Mercy through the Merits and Sufferings of his Son, and of the manifold rich Benefits which our Lord hath purchased with his most precious Blood; if a Mind deeply humbled under the Sense of our own Guilt and Unworthiness, to receive any Mercy at all from the Hands of our Creator and Sovereign Lord, whom we have by numberless and heinous Crimes so highly

* Οἰς τὰ γόνατα. 41.

† Luk. 22. Ver. 43.

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ly provok'd and incens'd against us; if such an inward Temper and Disposition of Soul becomes us at this Holy Feast, (which I think no Man will deny) then surely the most humble and reverential Gesture of our Body will become us too. Why should not a submissive lowly Deportment of Body suit with this Solemnity as well as a humble lowly Mind? And this is that which our Church declares to be the End and Design of her Injunction, in requiring all her Communicants to kneel, *viz. for a signification of an humble and grateful Acknowledgment of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers**.

6. They who urge Sitting as necessary and the only agreeable Gesture to the Nature of the Lord's Supper, because it's the common Table Gesture, must make the Sacrament either the same with an ordinary and common Feast, or only like it in some respects, and unlike it in others; as every like is not the same. To make it the same, is directly to unhallow and prophane the Ordinance; *it is to eat and drink unworthily, not discerning the Lord's Body*, as St. Paul charges the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 11. 29. For it's clear from that Discourse of the Apostle, that their not distinguishing between the Lord's Supper and a common Meal or Supper, was their great Fault, which he sharply reproves them for, as that which render'd them unworthy Communicants. Which will appear to any that will take the pains to examine the Matter †.

If the Lord's Supper be not the same with an ordinary Feast, how comes it to pass that the same Gesture must be necessarily used at both? If they differ in their whole Nature, then that which is agreeable to the Nature of the one, must be repugnant to the Nature of the other. If they agree in some respects

* See the Declaration at the end of the Communion Service in the Book of Common Prayer.

† Vid. 20, 21, 22, and compare them with 33, 34.

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respects only, and differ in others, but not in their whole Nature, then Kneeling may be as proper and suitable in some respects, as Sitting is in others. For though the Civil Custom of a Table Gesture be allowed to strike some Stroke in a Spiritual Ordinance, where there is eating and drinking, yet other respects in the Lord's Supper have a Stroke too, and that the greatest, if we duly weigh and consider the Ends of its Institution, which I have already described. And if upon such Examination it appear that Kneeling, or an adoring Gesture, holds fitting Correspondence with the principal respects and ends of the Lord's Supper, then the banquetting Gesture, though lawful and suitable in some less respects, must and ought in reason to give place, at least it ought not to be insisted on as the only agreeable and necessary Gesture without which we cannot worthily Communicate.

Whatsoever Gesture answers the principal Respects and Ends of this Holy Feast, best suits to its Nature, and consequently ought in reason to be best esteemed of, and sway more with us than any other, if we will wholly guide our selves by the Nature of the Thing. And that Kneeling or an adoring Posture doth best answer the Nature and Ends of the Sacrament I think is clear and undeniable, if the Account I have given of the Sacrament be good. I am sure howsoever, that there is no Reason why Sitting should jostle out Kneeling as Sinful and unsuitable to the Nature of this Holy Ordinance. Let * Mr. Cartwright a Learned Advocate for Nonconformists, be heard in this Matter, and determine it. *A Man must not (says he) refuse to Receive the Sacrament Kneeling when he cannot have it otherwise.*

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* Annot. in *Luke* 24. 14.

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4. The Primitive Church and Ancient Fathers had no such Notion of the Necessity of a Table Gesture, as is maintained and urged by Dissenters at present, which will appear from those Names and Titles they gave to this Holy Feast. And first, I observe from the Learned Mr. *Mede*, that for the space of two hundred Years after Christ, there is not the least mention made of the name *Table*, in any of their Writings. They * call the Place on which the Consecrated Elements stood, the *Altar*; and the Eucharist, an Oblation and a Sacrifice, because at this Solemnity they did Commemorate and Represent that Sacrifice which Christ once offered on the Cross for the Sins of the World. Now the Eucharist conceived under the Notion of a Sacrifice, and the Place on which it is offered, of an Altar, doth not necessarily require a Table Gesture, there is not that strict Connexion and Relation between an Altar or a Sacrifice, and a Common Table-Gesture, as is conceived to be between a Feast or Table, and a Feast or Table-Gesture.

2. The Primitive Christians and Ancient Fathers of the Church did not entertain any such Conceits about the Necessity of a Common Table-Gesture, as our Dissenters do. As that *Kneeling or an adoring Gesture is against the Dignity of Guests, and Debars us the Privileges and Prerogatives of the Lord's Table, such as Social Admittance and Social Entertainment; that it is against the Purpose of Christ whose Intention was to Dignify us by setting us at his Table* †; and much more of this Nature, and to this effect. Now the Primitive Church little dreamt of this Dignity and Privilege of Communicants, of this Purpose of Christ, and of

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* *Can. Apost. 2. St. Ignatius in 3. Epistles ad Philad. Tral-len. Eph. Justin Mart. Irenaeus.*

† *Dispute against Kneeling Arg. 1. p. 6. p. 2. 26, 27, 28, 31, 37.*

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this kind of Fellowship and Familiarity with him. The Phrases they use, and the August and Venerable Titles they give the Holy Sacrament, even when they consider it as a Feast and Supper, and speak of the Table on which it was Celebrated, plainly demonstrate. They call it, as St. Paul doth, the *Lord's Supper, the Kingly, Royal, and most Divine Supper*, which Import Deference, Distance, and Respect on our parts; *the dreadful Sacrifice, the Venerable and Unbloody Sacrifice, the Wonderful and Terrible Mysteries; the Royal, Spiritual, Holy, Formidable, Tremendous Table*. The Bread and Wine after Consecration, are in their Language called the *most Mysterious, most Holy Food and Nutriment, the most Holy things*; and the Place where the Table stood, the *most holy part of the Temple*, in allusion to that of the *Jewish Temple*, to which the *Jews* paid the highest Reverence. The Bread in particular they stiled the *Bread of God*; the Cup, the *Holy and Mysterious, the Royal and Dreadful Cup*.

The Primitive Bishops and Holy Fathers advise the Communicants to *Reverence these Holy Mysteries, to come with Fear and Trembling, with Sorrow and Shame, with Silence and downcast Eyes, to keep their Joy within, and to approach the Table with all the Signs and Expressions of Reverence and Humility imaginable*. How can these Speeches consist with that Social, Familiar Carriage at the Sacrament, which the Patrons of the Table-Gesture contend for, as the Priviledge of Guests, and the Prerogative of the Lord's Table. For a conclusion of this whole Matter, I desire our Nonconforming Brethren seriously to consider two or three Questions which I shall propound to them, and endeavour to frame an Honest and Impartial Answer, as in the presence of God who searcheth our Hearts and tryeth our Reins. They are not of a Captious Nature started to puzzle the Cause, or for the sake of Contention (God knows my Heart I have no such Designs through this whole Discourse) but they

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they are plain and easie to be resolved almost at first sight.

Quest. I. *Whether of two or three Gestures which are all agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament any one is not to be chosen and used by us, when we can't use another without breaking the Peace and Unity of that Church wherein we live?*

Quest. II. *Whether it can consist with Piety or Prudence, to Expose your selves and Families to Danger and the loss of the Law, when nothing is commanded but what is consistent with the Law of God, and agreeable to the Nature of the Sacrament, though not to your Phantasies and desires?*

Quest. III. *Whether we are not, as Christians, obliged by the Law of God and the Example of our Saviour to deny our selves many things, that are otherwise Lawful for us to do and use, and are highly pleasing and grateful to us, for the Good and Edification of our Neighbour*? If so, How much more, when the publick Good and Welfare of both Church and State depends upon such self-denial?*

Quest. IV. *Whether it be Piously done of you to chuse never to Receive the Sacrament, and so deprive your selves of the Spiritual Benefit of that Heavenly Feast, rather than part with a Civil Circumstance such as a Table-Gesture is?*

It is the Custom of our Country to Sit at Feasts, but few Men are so mad, as to refuse to Eat Standing and go Hungry away, when they have no room to Sit down. Why should we not be as Prudent at this Spiritual Feast, in the Concerns of our Souls, as we are in those of our Bodies.

Put the Case we are strictly prohibited by the Law of the Land, the Use of a Table or a Table-cloth at this Holy Feast, and we could not receive with that Convenience as now we may, would you end your days in a continual Refusal, and never receive the Sacrament? I don't know how far Passion and Prejudice and the Heat of Disputation may blind and transport

* Rom. 15. 2, 3, 4.

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transport Men ; but if they will calmly consider this matter, and hearken to Reason, they will find nothing to justify the total Neglect of this Ordinance by. I am very apt to think they will be of my Mind, for I declare to all the World, rather than not receive at all the Comfortable Sacrament of our Blessed Saviour's Body and Blood, I will receive it on a Tombstone, on the Ground, in a Church or in a Field, if all other things that are Essential to it be rightly observed and performed. If any of our Dissenting Brethren shall upon this Question think as I do, *viz.* that there is no absolute Necessity of a Table in this Case, which the Custom of our Country requires at Ordinary Feasts; He will also at the same time see there is no absolute Necessity of a Table-Gesture, and that we may Receive worthily without either the one or the other.

THE

THE
CASE of KNEELING

At the Holy Sacrament,
Stated and Resolved.

PART II.

Wherein these *QUERIES* are considered,

IV. *Whether Kneeling commanded in the Church of England, be not contrary to the General Practice of the Church of Christ in the first and purest Ages?*

V. *Whether it be unlawful for us to Receive Kneeling, because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolaters, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to idolatrous Ends and Purposes?*

THE only way for any Man to give or receive Satisfaction on this Point, is diligently to consult the Records of ancient Times, and from them to make a faithful Report of the Customs and Usages of the ancient Catholick Church: For when once these are made manifest, it will be very easie, by comparing things together, to discern whether they are consistent, or contrary to one another: Whether

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the Practice of the Church of *England* (as to Kneeling at the Sacrament) be agreeable or repugnant to that of the Primitive Christians. In Answer therefore to this Question, my Business is to give a plain Historical Account of the Practice of the Church in those early Ages of Christianity; from whence it may evidently appear, that the Church of *England*, by obliging her Communicants to kneel, doth not oblige them to practise any thing but what is agreeable to the Customs and Practice of pure Antiquity. And this I will endeavour to do under these Two general Heads.

(1.) It's highly probable that the Primitive Church used to kneel in the Act of receiving the Holy Sacrament, as our Custom at present is.

(2.) It's most certain they used an Adoring Posture.

But before I enter upon this Undertaking, I will crave Leave to premise somewhat concerning this Query in general, and somewhat for Explication of a Term contained in it, *viz.* What we are to understand by *The first and purest Ages.*

As to the Case it self in general, it is of such a Nature, and requires such an Answer, that not one among Twenty thousand of the ordinary and common Sort of People is dully qualified to understand it, and pass a true Judgment upon it: The Merits of the Cause are quite out of their reach; and whether we are in the right or the wrong they know not, but believe as they are taught, and upon the Credit of others, who they suppose are able to inform them about such matters. For in order to estimate the present Case aright, and as it ought, it is necessary that a Man have some competent Knowledge of, and insight into the Customs and Constitutions of the ancient Church, the Decrees of Councils,

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cils, the Works of the Fathers, and the Original Languages wherein they wrote ; which, I am sure, few or none of the Vulgar have attained to.

And truly upon this very Consideration I should have pass'd this Query by, without taking the least notice of it, had I not in my converse with several Dissenting Laymen, heard it started and pleaded in Justification of their Nonconformity to the Custom and Constitution of the Church of *England*?

I confess, I did a little wonder to find Men make that a Rule of Conscience, (and boldly rely and practise upon it) which they don't at all understand ; to find this Weapon put into the hands of ordinary and illiterate Persons, not only to defend themselves against the Commands of their lawful Superiours, and those who are set over them by God to be their Rulers and Guides, (in all such Cases, especially where they are not able to guide and direct themselves) but also to wound and murder the Reputation of the National Church, as degenerate from all Antiquity, as introducing and imposing novel Customs and Ceremonies repugnant to the Principles and Practices of the first and purest Ages.

Whether it be well done in Nonconforming Ministers to furnish the Common People with such kind of Arguments as these, so much out of their way, and above their Pitch and Capacity, I leave the honest part of the World to judge.

The (2d) thing I will premise is this ; Supposing kneeling at the Sacrament was never used by the ancient Church, yet such an Objection is a wretched Plea in the Mouth of a Dissenter to justify his Nonconformity by, as to this particular Gesture.

For if Kneeling be a Crime and unlawful, because it was not used in Primitive Times, sitting at the Sacrament is a much greater ; for that was condemned as an irreverend Posture, as will appear by and by. Besides they themselves have a very little Va-

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lue for Antiquity, and in all things almost run counter to it.

And one would think that they should be very willing to receive Kneeling, for that very reason which they produce against it; that is, because it is contrary to the currant Practice of all Antiquity, as they would make their Party to believe. This might be expected from them, because they will not be perswaded by any means or entreaties to comply with such Customs and Ceremonies of our Church as were undoubtedly used by the ancient Christians: (such as *God-fathers and God-mothers, the Cross in Baptism, the Ring in Marriage, the Feasts or Holy-days of Christmas, Easter, &c.*) but instead of Conformity to these Things, they raise an Hue and Cry upon the Church as Popish and Antichristian for enjoyning such Ceremonies, and pretend they had much rather endure any Extremity, than submit their Necks to such an intolerable Yoke. But how hard is the Government put to it to please such humerfome Persons! When our Governours tread in the very steps of the Primitive Bishops and blessed Martyrs, then they are Popish and Antichristian, and the Consciences of our Dissenting Brethren will not suffer them to conform; and at other times they cannot conform, because they require them to do what was never required nor practised in the Church of Christ throughout all preceeding Generations, till Transubstantiation, was established in the World. So that to follow Antiquity is a great Objection against Conformity at some times, and not to follow it, as great at others: When ever they please to make it so, it is so, say or do what one can to the contrary. Thus much concerning the Case in general: Let us now see the meaning of that Phrase, *The first and purest Ages.*

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This, I think, may be easily made out, from the Writings of those Men who have stoutly defended Sitting, or a common Table Gesture; who have delivered their Minds with as much clearness, and as roundly as one would wish, concerning this matter. For thus the Author of a Book formerly cited affirms, * *That Antiquity is wholly against us, and the Primitive Churches never so much as heard of Kneeling, and the Churches succeeding excluded it out of their Congregations, and gave it no Entertainment for the space of 1200 years. That Kneeling to receive the Sacrament, was not used at the Institution of the Lord's Supper, nor after in any Age of the Church, before the time of Honorius the third, about the year 1220.* So also another great † Champion for Sitting writes. *Didoclavius maintaineth (saith he) that which none of our Opposites are able to infringe, viz. That no Testimony can be produced which may evince that ever Kneeling was used before the time of Honorius the third.* He further observes from the History of the Waldenses, *That Bowing of the Knees before the Host was then only enjoined, when the Opinion of Transubstantiation got place.* By the Practice of the Church in the first and purest Ages, I conceive they mean thus much; *That from one Age wherein the holy Apostles lived, down to that wherein Transubstantiation was set on foot, or that wherein Honorius the Third enjoined the Adoration of the Host, Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Lord's Supper was never heard of nor used; or, as one Author expressly asserts it, till the year 1220.* Howsoever, for sureness sake, and in order to the clearing of this matter under our present Consideration, I think it will be requisite to fix the time wherein
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* Dispute upon Quest. of Kneeling, &c. to the Reader. Id. p. 67.

† Gillesp. Disp. against Eng. Pop. Cer. p. 191. Altar. Damascen. 785. lib. 1. c. 1.

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Transubstantiation was first broached, as well as when it was establish'd, or imposed as an Article of Faith; and so too wherein the Adoration of the Host was enjoyned; whereby the just Bounds and Limits will be known, beyond which we are not to pass to fetch in Evidence; and consequently all Extravagancy will be prevented on our part, and all Cavilling (if possible) on theirs.

As for the Time then, which we enquire after, I think we may safely rely on the Judgment of a very learned *Prelate of our own, which he delivers after this manner: The word *Transubstantiation* is so far from being found in the sacred Scriptures, or the Writings of the ancient Fathers, that the great Patrons of it do themselves acknowledge, it was not so much as heard of before the Twelfth Century. Nay, that the Thing it self without the Word, that the Doctrine without the Expression cannot be proved from Scripture, is ingenuously acknowledged by the most † learned Schoolmen, who endeavour by other Arguments therefore to defend it, and allow it to be brought in by the Authority of the Pope, and not received in the Church of Rome till 1200 years after Christ. The first Authors who mention this new-coyn'd word *Transubstantiation*, are *Petrus Blesensis*, who lived under Pope *Alexander* the Third (about the year 1159) and *Stephanus Eduensis*, a Bishop, whose Age and Writings are very doubtful. || The Pope, who first establish't this monstrous Doctrine by his own Arbitrary Power, as an Article of Faith, was *Innocent* the Third. And his Successor ** *Honorius* was the Man who decreed *Adoration* to the Host.

* Histor. Transub. Papal. Johan. Ep. Dunelm. Edit. 1675. p. 53. 54.

† Scotus, Durandus, Biel. Cameracen. Cajetan. &c.

|| An. Dom. 1215. ** An. Dom. 1217, or thereabouts.

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Hof. The first Council which took notice and approved of the Papal Decree for Transubstantiation, was that assembled at *Constance**, which condemned *Wickliff* for an Heretick, because among other Truths he had asserted this; *That the Substance of the Bread and Wine remains materially in the Sacrament of the Altar; and that in the same Sacrament no Accidents of Bread and Wine remain without a Substance: And for this Opinion they ordered his Body to be taken out of his Grave and burnt to Ashes.* Thus things stood till the year 1551, when the Council of *Trent* publisht it to the World for an infallible Truth, and imposed the Belief of it upon all under the pain of an *Anathema*.

As for the Doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, and the Corporal Presence of Christ at, with, and in the Sacrament, it was started long before that of *Transubstantiation*, and was much disputed among learned Men. He who first broacht it in the East was † *John Damascen*, in the days of *Gregory the Third*. And about an hundred years afterwards it was set a-foot in the West, by the means of ‖ *Paschasius Radbertus* a Monk of *Corbie*, and one *Amalarius* a Deacon of *Metz*; the former taught, that Christ was consubstantiated, or rather enclosed in the Bread, and corporally united to it in the Sacrament; for as yet there was no thoughts of the Transubstantiation of Bread. The latter gives it as a part of his Belief, †† *That the simple Nature of the Bread and Wine mixed, is turned into a reasonable Nature, viz. of the Body and Blood of Christ.* Moreover, he in another place confesseth,

* A. D. 1415.

† About the year 740.

‖ Who wrote *de Eccles. Officiis de ord. Antiphon. &c.* contemporary with *Amalarius Fortunatus* Archb. of *Triers*, who wrote *de Sac. Baptif. ad Carol. M.*

†† *Amalar. de Eccles. Off. lib. 3. c. 24. vid. lib. 3. c. 35.*

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fesseth, that it was past his skill to determine what became of his Body after it was eaten. *When the Body of Christ is taken with a good Intention, it is not for me to dispute (* saith he) whether it be invisibly taken up into Heaven, or kept in our Body untill the day of our Burial, or exhaled into the Air, or whether it go out of the Body with the Blood, or be sent out by the Mouth, &c.* For this, and another Foolery of the three Parts or Kinds of Christ's Body, he was censured by a Synod held at *Cressy*, wherein it was declared by the Bishops of *France*, That the Bread and Wine are spiritually made the Body of Christ; which being a Meat of the Mind, and not of the Belly, is not corrupted, but remaineth unto everlasting Life. From whence we may learn (as also from the Writings of several learned Men of that Age who opposed these Dotages of the Corporal Presence) that the Western Church had not then adulterated the Doctrine of the Sacrament, but followed the pure and sound Sense of the Ancient Fathers, and condemned these Whimfies and gross Conceits of the Carnal or Oral eating of Christ in the Sacrament. Nay in the year 1079, when *Hildebrand*, called *Gregory* the 7th, came to the Papal Chair, the Bishops and Doctors were divided in their Opinions concerning the Corporal Presence, some maintaining *Berengarius* his Opinion who denied it, and some following that of *Paschasius*, as appears from the Acts of that Council (writ by those of the Pope's Faction) which was called on purpose to condemn *Berengarius*. Moreover, it's recorded, that *Hildebrand* himself doubted whether what we receive at the Lord's Table be indeed the Body of Christ by a substantial Conversion: For three months
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* *Amalar. Epist. ad Guytardum* MS. in Bibliothec. Coll. S. Benedic. Cant. Cod. 55. cited by Archbishop *Usher*, *Anf. Jesuits Chal.* p. 75. *Rabanus Maurus, John Erigena Wala. Strabo, Ratramus or Bertramus.*

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space was granted to *Berengarius* to consider in, and a Fast appointed to the Cardinals, That God would shew by some Sign from Heaven who was in the Right, the *Pope* or *Berengarius**. It seems the Doctrine of the *Pope's* Infallibility was not known to that Age; and that of the Corporal Presence much doubted. But however, thus much we may conclude upon, That from the dark and mysterious Writings of those Men, *Paschasius* and *Amalarius*, did that monstrous Error of *Transubstantiation* spring which afterwards came to be established as an Article of Faith in the Church of *Rome*.

As to the time then wherein we are to contain this Discourse, it shall be the first 700 Years after Christ; and to Authors only that lived within that Compass, I will appeal for Evidence in the matter under Dispute: And surely our Dissenting Brethren will allow, that they lived in the first and purest Ages, because they were dead before the Doctrines either of *Consubstantiation* or *Transubstantiation* were hatcht, much less received or establishd in the World.

If I would take all the advantage that our Adversaries give us, I need not confine my self within so narrow a compass; for they challenge us to produce one instance for Kneeling before the days of *Honorius* the Third, who lived 1220 or thereabouts; and confidently affirm Kneeling was never heard of nor used for 1200 Years after Christ. I hope therefore they will not complain of foul dealing, or that I strain the point, since I give away 500 Years, wherein the pure ancient Catholick Faith, touching the Holy Sacrament began to decline, and was by various Arts and Tricks at last foully corrupted. Which Piece of Liberality I need not have exercised, but that I design purely to convince, not to contend. Let

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* *Benne* Card. in vita *Hild.* Episc. Dunelm. Hist. Transf. p. 135.

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us therefore bring this Matter under Examination, and see what the Practice of the Church was within the Compass of 700 Years after Christ ; or, which is all one, in the first and purest Ages. And what I shall produce out of Antiquity, may be conveniently placed under these two general Heads, according to the Method proposed in the beginning of this Discourse.

(1.) That notwithstanding several Nonconformists, well esteemed of for Learning, have in their Writings boldly asserted Kneeling to be contrary to all Antiquity ; it is highly probable the Primitive Christians did Kneel in the Act of Receiving, as the Custom is in the Church of *England*.

(2.) It's certain they used an Adoring Posture.

As to the first, I hope I shall be able to make it good by this following Account, which I shall give with all possible Plainness and Sincerity. And I declare before-hand to all the World, that I will offer nothing for Satisfaction to others, which I do not think in my Conscience to be true ; and that I would not use a Fallacy to serve the Cause, though I were sure it could never be detected by any of our Separating Brethren. In the first place, for the first Century, or 100 Years, wherein our Lord and his Apostles lived, the Scripture hath left us in the dark, and under great Uncertainty what the particular Gesture was which they used at the Institution and Celebration of the Holy Sacrament ; which I think I have sufficiently evinced in my Answers to the first and second Query*.

In the next place, I desire those who urge a common Table-gesture, and particularly Sitting (which was an usual Posture at Meals among those Eastern Nations as well as among us now) to observe, that Sitting was esteemed a very irreverend Posture to be used

* Part I. p. 17.

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used in the *Worship* and *Service* of God by the Primitive Church ; of which I shall give a few instances. The ancient *Laodicean* Synod * finding great Inconveniences to arise from the Love-Feasts which were kept at the same time with the Lord's Supper, prohibited absolutely the said Feasts, and the lying upon Couches in the Church ; as their Manner was of solemnizing those Feasts. The words of the Canon are these : *The Feasts of Charity ought not to be kept in the Lord's House, or in the Church, neither may ye eat or make Couches in the House of God.* This was afterwards forbidden by the Council of *Carthage*†, and the Decrees of both these Provincial or National Councils were ratified by the sixth *Trullan* Council ||, and that under the pain of Excommunication ; upon which in some time the Custom dwindled to nothing.

Now the Reasons which induced these holy Bishops and ancient Fathers to prohibit these *Feasts of Charity*, and the use of a *discumbing Posture* upon Beds or Couches in the House of God (which was also an ordinary Table-Gesture, according to the Custom of those Times) were in all probability taken from the Disorder and Irreverence, the Animosities and Excess that accompanied these Feasts, and which both poor and rich were guilty of : They did not distinguish between their spiritual and corporal Food, between the Lord's Supper and an ordinary Meal ; they did not *discern the Lord's Body*, as *St. Paul* speaks ; and I am apt to think that the same Abuses which had crept in so early into the Church of *Corinth*, and which *St. Paul* took notice of and reprov'd, continued and spread till the Church by her Censures and

* Which met under Pope *Sylvester I.* between the *Neocæsarian* Synod and the first general Council of *Nice* ; that is between the years 314. and 325, as some learned Men think ; or *A. D.* 365. after the first general *Nicene* Council, as others.

† Can. 28. || Can. 74.

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and Decrees opposed the growing Evil, and rooted up the Causes of such mischievous Effects.

To these Canons of Councils, if we add the Testimony of particular Bishops, who lived in those first Ages, and who speak not their own private Sense and Opinion, but the Customs and Usages of the Church in their time, we shall plainly discern that *Sitting* was accounted an *irreverent posture* in the Worship of God, while they were engaged in Prayer or Praise, or receiving the Holy Sacrament.

*Justin Martyr**, who lived in the Second Century, which immediately succeeded that of the Apostles, seems to hint, that the People sat at the Sermon, and while the Lessons were reading, when † he informs us concerning the Christian Assemblies in his time, and the place where he lived: After the reading of the Lessons and the exhortatory Sermon of the Bishop, *We rise up* (saith he) *all together, and send up our Prayers*. He doth not indeed signify what the particular Gesture was which they used at their Prayers, but it's clear enough they did not Sit; and they might Kneel, for any thing he saith to the contrary: For it's customary among us to sit at the Sermon, and during the reading of the Lessons, and after they are ended, we may be truly said to rise up all together, and send up our Prayers: But if any one should hence infer, that we *stood* and not kneeled, he would conclude against the Law of the Land, and the common Practice of the Church: Rising up doth not necessarily imply, that a Man stands or kneels afterwards, but somewhat previous to both, for we generally rise before we do either. But however Sitting at the Sermon and Lessons was usual in those Assemblies which this holy Father and Martyr frequented, yet in most other places the People were not permitted to sit at all; not so much as at the Lessons, or in Sermon-time;

*. Flor. A. D. 155. † Apol. 2.

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as appears partly from what * *Philostorgius* an ancient Ecclesiastical Historian observes of *Theophilus* an *Indian Bishop*, That among several Irregularities which he corrected in those Churches, he particularly reformed this, *that the People were wont to sit when the Lessons out of the Gospel were read unto them*: And partly from *Sozomen's* History, wherein he notes it as a very unusual thing in the Bishop of *Alexandria*, *that he did not rise up when the Gospels were read*.

But the fullest evidence † *Optatus*, Bishop of *Milevis* affords us, by what he writes against *Parmenianus* the *Donatist*; for after he had taxed him with Pride and Innovation, with a censorious uncharitable Spirit which animated all his Tractates or Sermons to the People, he cites a Passage out of the || *Psalms*, and applies it home to him in this manner; *Thou sittest and speakest against thy Brother*, &c. in which place God reproves him who sits and defames his Brother: And therefore such evil Teachers as you (says he) are more particularly pointed at in this Text; *For the People are not licensed to sit in the Church*. This Text chiefly respects the Bishops and Presbyters, who had only a Right and Privilege to sit in the Publick and Religious Assemblies, but doth not concern the People who stood all the time. Now, if it had not been a general and prevailing Custom among the Christians of those times, as well Heretical as Orthodox, to stand all the time of Divine Service, and particularly at the Lessons and Sermons, *Parmenianus* might easily have retorted this Argument upon *Optatus*, as being weak, and concluding nothing against him in particular, but

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* Hist. Eccles. l. 3. n. 5. p. 29. Flor. A. D. 425.

† Eccles. Hist. l. 7 c. 19. p. 734. Flor. A. D. 440.

|| Psal. 49. in our Transl. 50. 20. Lib. de Schif. Donat. p. 78. Par. Edit. A. D. 365. Vid. *Albasp.* not. in 4 lib. *Optat.*

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what might be charged in common upon all private Christians who sat in the Church as well as he.

Again, that Sitting was esteemed *Irreverent* in the Worship of God, will further be manifested from a Passage or two in * *Tertullian*, who lived in the same Century with *Justin Martyr* before cited; and I think nothing can be spoken more plain and home to the purpose than what he delivers concerning this Gesture, which is so much contended for by our Dissenting Brethren; for among other Vanities and ill Customs taken notice of and reprov'd by this ancient Father, this was one, That they were wont (some of them) to sit at Prayer. A little further in the same Chapter, *Tertullian* hath these Words: † *Add hereunto the Sin of Irreverence, which the very Heathen, if they did perceive well and understand what we did, would take notice of. For if it be irreverent to sit in the presence of, and to confront one whom you have a high respect and veneration for, how much more irreligious is this Gesture in the sight of the living God, the Angel of Prayer standing by! unless we think fit to upbraid God that Prayer hath tired us.* Add to all this that saying of || *Constantine the Great*, recorded by *Eusebius* as an Indication of the Piety of that Christian Emperor, with which I will conclude this point. It was upon occasion of a *Panegyrick* concerning the Sepulchre of our Saviour, delivered by *Eusebius*, not in the Church,

* Floruit A. D. 198. *Tertul. de Orat.* 12. Tom. 2. p. 130. edit. Colon. Agrip. 1617. item quod assignata oratione assidendi mos est quibusdam, &c.

† Eo apponitur & irreverentiæ crimen etiam ipsis nationibus si quid scirent intelligendum. Si quidem irreverens est assidere sub conspectu contraque conspectum ejus quem quem maxime reverearis ac venereris; quanto magis sub conspectu Dei vivi, Angelo adhuc orationis adstante, factum illud irreligiosissimum est? nisi exprobramus Deo quod oratio fatigaverit. *Tertull. de Oratione*, c. 12.

|| *Euseb. de vit. Const. mag. lib. 4. p. 400. Col. Allob. 1612.*

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Church, but in the Palace of the Emperour; and the Historian observes, to the Praise of this excellent Prince, that though it was a long and tedious Oration, and though the Emperour were earnestly solicited to sit down on his Throne which was hard by, yet he refused, and stood attentively all the time, as the rest of the Auditory did; affirming it to be *unfit to attend upon any Discourse concerning God with Ease and Softness, and that it was very consonant to Piety and Religion, that Discourses about Divine things should be heard standing.*

Thus much may suffice for satisfaction, that the ancient Church did by no means approve of Sitting, or a common Table-Gesture, as fitting to be used in time of Divine Service, except at the Reading of the Lessons, and hearing of the Sermon; which too was only practised in some Places; for in others the People were not allowed to sit at all in their Religious Assemblies. Which Custom is still observed in most, if not all the Eastern Churches at this day, wherein there are no Seats erected or allowed for the use of the People.

Now upon what hath been said, I shall only make this brief Reflection, and so proceed. If the Apostles of our Lord had (in pursuance of their Commission to teach all Nations) in their Travels throughout the World, every where taught and established sitting or discumbing (which were the common Table-Gesture according to the Custom of those Eastern Countries) not only as convenient, but as necessary to be used in order to worthy receiving the Lord's Supper; it is a most strange and unaccountable thing how there should be (1) such an early and universal Revolt of the Primitive Church from the Doctrine and the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles; and then (2) Considering what a high value and esteem the Primitive Christians had for the Apostles, the first Founders of their Faith, and for all that

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passed

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passed under their Names, it seems to me not only highly improbable, but morally impossible, that so many Churches, together with their respective Bishops and Pastors dwelling in remote and distant Countries, (not bias'd by Faction, nor swayed by a superiour Authority, being perfectly free and independent one upon another) should unanimously consent and conspire together to introduce a novel Custom into the Church of Christ, contrary to the Apostolical Practice and Order; and not only so, but (3) to Censure the Practice and Injunctions of divinely inspired Men, as indecent and unfit to be followed and observed in the Publick Worship of God: and all this without the least Notice taken by, without any Complaint or Opposition from any particular Person, either in the then present, or succeeding Generation.

(3) The Primitive Church esteemed the Holy Sacrament to be the most solemn Part of Christian Worship, as that which deservedly challenged from them the utmost pitch of Devotion, and the highest degree of Reverence that they could possibly pay and express either with their Souls or Bodies. This is clear, partly from those Honorary Titles they bestowed upon this Ordinance and adorn'd it with, which import the greatest Deference, and the most awful Regard imaginable*; partly from the tedious and severe Discipline which she exercised the Catechumens and Penitents with, before she admitted them into the Communion of the Faithful, and approved of them as fit to partake of the Holy Mysteries. To be admitted to the Sacrament so only as to behold it, and to be present at those Prayers which were put up by worthy Communicants over the great Propitiatory Sacrifice, was heretofore accounted

* See part 1. p. 58.

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counted a high Honour and Priviledge : But to make one at this Heavenly Feast, and to receive the Pledges of our Lord's Love, was esteemed the Top and Perfection of Christianity, and the Extremity of that Honour and Happinefs a Christian is capable of in this Life. Heretofore (with shame and reproach be it spoken to our Stupidly Wicked and Degenerate Age) to be excluded from the Holy Communion, was look'd upon as the greatest Curse and Punishment that could be inflicted ; and on the other hand, to be a Communicant, to have a Freedom of Access to the Lord's Table, as the greatest Blessing and most ample Reward that could be propounded ; the Sum of a Christian's Hopes, the Center of all his Wishes during his Abode here.

(4) For Standing in time of Divine Service, both at their Prayers and at the Sacrament, there are so many and so clear Testimonies extant in pure Antiquity, that a Man must take a great deal of Pains not to see this Truth, who is never so little conversant in the Records of those Times ; and in such a Man it must be height of folly and impudence to deny it. The bare asserting of it shall be sufficient, because to insist upon the Proof of it by an Enumeration of Particulars, would swell this Discourse beyond Measure ; and besides, it would be a needless Labour, since the * great Patrons of Sitting, or the common Table-Gesture, do frankly own and acknowledge that Standing was a Posture generally used by the Ancient Church in her Religious Assemblies, both at their ordinary Prayers, and at the Communion Service. Howsoever, I shall be forced to say something concerning this matter under the following particular ;

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(5) Which

* *Gillesp. Disp. against En. Po. Cer. point*, 1660, p, 190, 191,

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(5) Which is this : That the Primitive Christians (though on the Lord's Days, and for the Space of 50 days between *Easter* and *Whitsunday*, they observed Standing, yet at other times) used the Gesture of Kneeling at their Publick Devotions. Which will appear from a Decree pass'd in the first general Council assembled at * *Nice*, in words to this effect : *Because there are some which Kneel at the Lord's Day, and in the days of Pentecost (that is between Easter and Whitsunday,) it is therefore ordained by this Holy Synod, that when we pay our Vows unto the Lord in Prayer, we observe a Standing-gesture, to the end that a uniform and agreeable Custom may be maintained or secured through all Churches.* By which Canon, Provision was made against Kneeling, not as if it were an inconvenient and unbecoming Gesture to be used at all in the Publick Worship of God, but only as being an irregular and unfit Posture to be used at such particular Times and Occasions as are there specified, viz. on the Lords Days, and the Feasts of Pentecost; when for any Christian to stand, was to cross the general Custom and Practice of the Church at that time : For this Council did not (you must note) introduce and establish any new thing in the Church, but only endeavoured by its Authority to keep alive and in credit an ancient Custom, which they saw began to be neglected by some Christians. And from that Clause in the Canon, *Because there are some which Kneel at the Lord's day, and in the days of Pentecost, &c.* we may with good reason infer, that Kneeling was the Posture that was generally used at other times in their Religious Assemblies. For if Standing had been generally observed by all Churches in time of Divine Service at all other Times, as well as those mentioned in the Decree, what occasion or necessity had

* Can. 20. about the year 325.

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had there been for such an Injunction, whereby all Christians were obliged to do that which they constantly and universally did before? There is a Passage in the Author of the Questions and Answers in *Justin Martyr*, which will put this Matter out of doubt, and gives us the Reason why they altered their Posture on the Lord's day, * *It is (saith he) that by this means we may be put in mind both of our Fall by Sin, and our Resurrection and Restitution by the Grace of Christ: that for six days we pray upon our Knees, is in token of our Fall by Sin; but that on the Lord's day we do not bow the Knee, doth symbolically represent our Resurrection, &c.* This he there tells us was the Custom derived from the very times of the Apostles; for which he cites *Irenæus* in his Book concerning *Easter*. That it was ancient, appears from *Tertullian*, who lived in the † same Age with *Irenæus*, and speaks of it as if it had been established by Apostolical Authority, or at least by Custom had obtained the Force of a Law; for these are his Words: || *We esteem it a great Act of Wickedness or Villany, either to fast or kneel on the Lord's day.* Which intimates too, that Fasting and Kneeling in their Publick Worship, were both lawful and customary at other Times. To whose Testimony if we joyn that of another Father who lived some time after the first general *Nicene Council*, we need not produce any more Witnesses to clear the matter.

It is that of *Epiphanius* in his *Exposition* of the Catholick Faith; where he certifies, *that the weekly stated Fasts (of Wednesday and Friday) were diligently kept*

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by

* Respons. ad quest. 115. p. 468.

† An. Dom. 198.

|| *Dei dominico jejunium nefas ducimus, vel de geniculis adorare, Terr. de Cor. mil. c. 3. 206. Col. Agrip. edit. 1617.*

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by the Catholick Church the whole year round, excepting the fifty days of Pentecost, on which they do not Kneel, nor is there any Fast appointed*. The Reason of which Custom was (as both St. Jerome and St. Augustine attest†) because all that Space between Easter and Whitsunday was a time of joy and triumph, viz. over Death and the Grave; and therefore on these days we neither Fast nor bend our Knees, nor incline and bow down our Bodies, but with our Lord are lifted up to Heaven. We pray standing (all that time) which is a sign of the Resurrection. By which Posture, that is, we signifie our Belief of that Article. From whence we may conclude, that as the Christians of those first Ages did at other times certainly Fast, so they did also certainly Kneel at their Prayers in their Publick and Religious Assemblies.

6. Another thing I would have observed in order to my present Design, is this; That the Primitive Christians were wont to receive the Holy Sacrament every day ||, as oft as they came together for Publick Worship: which Custom as it was introduced and practised by the Apostles themselves (according to the judgment of very Learned Men, and that not without good Grounds from the Holy Scripture) so it continued a considerable time in the Church, even down to St. Austin**, who flourish'd in the beginning of the Fifth Century, and seems clearly to intimate

* *Epiph. exposit. Fid. Cathol.* p. 1105. edit. *Par. Flor. An. Dom.* 390. ἐν αἷς ἔτερον κλισίαν γίνονται, ἔτερον νῆσις τέτοκται.

† *St. Hieronym. prolog. Comment. in Ep. ad Ephes. St. August. Ep.* 119. ad *Jan.* c. 15.

|| *Acts* 2. 42, 46. *Acts* 20. 7. compared with *1 Cor.* 16.

** *An. Dom.* 410. *St. A. g. Ep.* 118. ad *Januarium*, c. 2, 3. p. 556. 7. *Basil. edit.* à Froben. 1541. *St. Ambr. cap. ult. lib. 5. c. 4. de Sacram. p. 449. Paris. St. Hier. adver. Jovinian. p. 37. Paris. id. in Ep. ad Lucinium Baticum, p. 71. edit.*

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intimate to us in his Writings, that it was customary in his Days, as St. *Ambrose* and St. *Hierome* had hinted before him concerning the Churches of *Milan* and *Rome* in their Times. From * St. *Cyprian* we are fully assured that it was so in his Days, viz. about the year 250. For in his Explication of that Petition in the Lord's Prayer, *give us this day our daily Bread*, he expressly tells us, *that they did receive the Eucharist every day, as the Food that nourish'd them to Salvation*. St. *Basil*, Bishop of *Cæsaria*, who lived about 370 years after Christ, affirms, that in his Church they communicated four times a Week, on the Lord's day, *Wednesday*, *Friday*, and *Saturday*; two of which were Station-days, or Set-days of Fasting, which were punctually observed by the generality of Christians in those Times. And this I the rather note, because in all probability, since they did receive the Sacrament on these Days, they did not alter the Posture of the Day, but received Kneeling; for if Kneeling was adjudged by the Catholick Church an unsuitable and improper Posture for times of Mirth and Joy, such as the Lord's days and those of Pentecost were; and if they were thought guilty of a great Irregularity, who used that Posture on those Festivals; then we may reasonably conclude, that Standing, which was the Festival Posture, was not used by the Catholick Church on days of Fasting and Humiliation, and that they who stood at their Publick Devotions on Fasting days, were as irregular as they who kneel'd on a Festival. And that this was really so, may, I think, be clearly collected from a Passage in *Tertullian* † to this purpose; *We judge it*
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* Vid. Dr. *Cave*, Prim. Christ. p. 329. St. *Cypr.* de Orat. Dom. p. 147. Oxon. edit. 1682. Can. 2. Apost. & Antiochen. Concil. Can. 2. *Basil.* Ep. 289. ad *Cæsarium Patricium*, To. 3. p. 279.

† *Tertul.* de Orat. c. 3. p. 296. Edit. Col. Agrip. 1617.

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an unlawful and impious thing (says he) either to Fast or Kneel at our Devotions on the Lord's day. We rejoyce in the same Freedom or Immunity from Easter to Whitsontide. To be freed and exempted from Fasting and Kneeling, not only on the Lord's day, but all the days of Pentecost, was esteemed a great Privilege, and matter of much Joy to this Holy Father, and the Christians who lived in his Days. And from hence I infer, that at other times, when they met together for Publick Worship, (especially on days of Fasting) they generally used Kneeling, and that at the Lord's Supper, which was administred every day in the *African Church**, whereof *Tertullian* was a Presbyter: For if they had generally stood at all other times of the year in their Religious Assemblies, as well at their Prayers as at the Lord's Supper, which is the Privilege and Immunity they boasted so much of, and rejoyced in; viz. that they were freed from Kneeling on such days, and at such certain times? Not to Fast on the Lord's day was a Privilege, because they did Fast on the Week-days. And so say I of Standing: To Stand on the Lord's Days, and all the time between *Easter* and *Whitsunday*, could not be thought a special Act of Favour, and the Prerogative of those Seasons; if Kneeling had not been the ordinary and common Gesture at all other times throughout the Year. And if Kneeling was the Gesture which the Christians did then commonly use at their Prayers on the Week-days; then in all probability, when they received the Sacrament on those days, they received in the ordinary Posture †.

* So St. Cyprian before cited.

† *Dido clavii*'s own Argument retorted. *Si stabant inter orandum (viz. Die Dominico, & toto temporis intervallo inter Pascha & Pentecosten) non est probabile de geniculis adorasse cum perciperent Eucharistiam, sed potius contrarium, nempe stetisse. Altar. Damasc. P. 784.*

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The (7th) and last Particular which I would observe relating to this Business, is this ; That the Primitive Christians received the Holy Sacrament praying. The whole Communion-service was performed with Prayer and Praise. It was begun with a general Prayer, wherein the Minister and the whole Congregation joyntly prayed * *for the universal Peace and Welfare of the Church, for the Tranquillity and the Quietness of the World, for the Prosperity of the Age, for wholesome Weather and fruitful Seasons, for Kings and Emperors, and all in Authority, &c.* The Elements were sanctified by a solemn Benediction, the form whereof is set down by † *St. Ambrose* ; and the whole Action was concluded with Prayer and Thanksgiving. But that which more particularly affects the matter in hand, is, that the Minister used a Prayer at the delivery of the Sacrament to each Communicant, to which every one at their receiving said *Amen*.

The Apostolical Constitutions, tho' in some things much corrupted and adulterated, yet in many things are very sound, and in this particular seem to express the most ancient Practice of the Church. For there we find this Account.

The Apostolical Constitutions (confessed by all hands to be very ancient ||, tho' not altogether so much as is pretended in some things) give us this plain account in these words : ** *Let the Bishop give the*

* Tert. Apol. c. 39. p. 47. St. Aug. Ep. 118. Const. Apost. l. 2. c. 57. p. 881. St. Chrys. Hom. 1. in 2. cap. Epist. 1. Tim.

† De Sacr. l. 4. c. 5. p. 439. See Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, c. 11. p. 347.

|| Mr. Daillé sets them at the latter end of the 5 Century Const. Apost. lib. 8. c. 13. p. 483.

** Καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐπίσκοπος θ' διδόντω τῷ προσφερόντι λέγων, σῶμα χειρῶν· Καὶ ὁ δεξιμὸς θ' λέγέτω αἷμα· ὁ δὲ διάκονος θ' κατεχέτω τὸ πτύγιον, καὶ ἐπιδιδόντες λέγέτω, αἷμα χειρῶν, πτύγιον ζωῆς ; καὶ ὁ πῖνον λέγέτω Ἀμὴν.

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the Sacrifice, (by which name the Holy Sacrament was called in Primitive times) saying, the Body of Christ: And let him that receives say, Amen. Then let the Deacon take the Cup, and at the delivery say, The Blood of Christ, the Cup of Life; and let him that drinketh say, Amen.

Now, although it cannot be denied, but that these Constitutions are in many things adulterated, yet it is allowed on the other hand, that in many things they are very sincere, and convey to us the pure Practice of the most ancient Times. That they give a true and sound Account in this Matter, relating to the Sacrament, we may rest fully satisfied, from the concurring Evidence of other ancient Writers, who lived in the fourth Century: For both St. * *Ambrose* and St. *Cyril of Jerusalem*, make express mention of the Peoples saying *Amen*, when the Minister said *The Body of Christ*. So also St. *Austin* speaks of it as universally practised by the Church of Christ when the Cup was delivered. And there is a very remarkable Passage recorded by *Eusebius*, in his Ecclesiastical History, which being very apposite to our purpose I will set down for the close of all.

† *Novatus* a Presbyter of the Church of *Rome*, having renounced the Communion of the Church, and the Authority of his rightful Bishop *Cornelius*, set up for himself, and became the Head of an unreasonable and unnatural Schism; and the better to secure to him the Profelytes he had gained, he altered the usual Form of Prayer at the Sacrament, and in the room thereof, substituted a new fangled Oath, which he obliged every

* *Ambro de Sacr. lib. 4. c. 5. p. 440. To. 4. St. Cyril Hier. Catech. Mystag. 5. Universa Ecclesia accepto Christi sanguine dicit Amen. Resp. ad Orosi. quest. 49. Tom. 4. p. 691. Basil. 1541.*

† *Epist. Cornel. ad Fab. apud Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. 6. c. 35. de Novato.*

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every Communicant to take at the time of their receiving, which (among other wicked actions) is particularly taken notice of and charged upon him by *Cornelius*, as the worst of all, and the most villanous Innovation. * *When he came* (says he) *to offer Sacrifices* (i. e. to celebrate the Lord's Supper) *and to distribute to every one his Part, at the delivery of it he constrained those persons who unhappily sided with him, to take an Oath, instead of offering up Prayers and Praises according to Custom; and instead of saying Amen, he forced every Communicant, when he received the Bread, to say, I will never return to Cornelius as long as I live.*

From these plain Instances we may see how closely our Church follows the steps of pure antiquity in the Form of Prayer appointed to be used by the Minister at the giving of the Bread and the Cup to the People: which runs thus: *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, preserve thy Body and Soul to everlasting life, &c.* which last Clause was added by latter times, by way of explication, to that short Form which the Primitive Church used: And surely it's every Christian's Interest, as well as his Duty, to joyn with the Minister in such a Prayer, and return a hearty *Amen* to it.

I will now briefly sum up the Evidence that hath been produced out of Antiquity, in justification of Kneeling at the Holy Communion, according to the Custom and Practice of our Church; and observe where it directs us to fix, and what to resolve upon. And in this order it lies: Sitting was adjudged by the ancient Catholick Church a very unfit and irreverent

* Πούσας γὰρ τὰς προσευχὰς, καὶ διανεμὼν ἑκάστῳ τὸ μῆρ, καὶ ἐπιδοῦναι τὰ τοῦ ὁμνυεῖν ἀντὶ εὐλογεῖν τὰς ποταπώτερες ἀνθρώπων ἀναγκάζει, &c. καὶ ἀντὶ τῆς εἰπεῖν λαμβάνοντα τὸν ἄρτον, τὸ Ἀμὲν, καὶ ἐπὶ ἀνήζῳ πρὸς Κορνήλιον.

rent Posture to be used in time of Divine Service, when they were solemnly engaged in the Worship of God; the Holy Sacrament was esteemed the most solemn Act or Branch of Christian Worship: The Primitive Christians generally used Standing at their publick Devotions, only on the Lord's days, and all that space of time that falls between *Easter* and *Whitsunday*: At all other times in their Religious Assemblies Kneeling was their Worshipping Posture; and they were wont to meet and receive the Lord's Supper every day; and particularly on their stated Weekly Fasts, which they kept every *Wednesday* and *Friday*, when to stand was thought as great an Irregularity, as to kneel was on the Lord's day: And lastly, the Holy Sacrament was delivered and received with a Form of Prayer, and that on those days when they constantly prayed Kneeling. All these things therefore being considered, I think the least that can be concluded from them, is what I asserted and designed, *viz.* That in all likelihood the Primitive Christians did Kneel at the Holy Communion, as the Custom is in the Church of *England*; for Sitting was generally condemned as an indecent and irreverent Gesture, by the Primitive Church; and no Man in his Wits will say, that Prostration or lying flat upon the ground, was ever used in the Act of receiving, or ever fit to be so; it must be therefore one of these two, either Standing or Kneeling.

As for Standing all the time of publick Worship, which was used only on the Lord's day and in Pentecost, the Reason thereof was drawn not from the Sacrament, but from the Day and Festival Season, when they did more particularly commemorate the Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour, openly testified their Belief of that great Article; at such times therefore they chose Standing, as being a Gesture suitable to the present Occasion, and as an Emblem and Sign of the Resurrection.

And

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And from hence I gather, that on their common and ordinary Days (when there was no peculiar Reason to invite or oblige them to stand at the Sacrament) in all likelihood they used Kneeling, that is, the ordinary Posture. They used one and the same Posture (*viz.* *Standing*) both at their Prayers and at the Sacrament on the Lord's day, and for Fifty days after *Easter*, contrary to what was usual at other times; and why then should any Man think they did not observe one and the same Posture at all other times? *viz.* that as at such times they did constantly Kneel at their Prayers, so they did also constantly Kneel at the Sacrament, which was given and received in a Prayer.

From the strength of these Premisses I may howsoever promise my self thus much success; that whosoever shall carefully weigh and peruse them with a teachable and unprejudic'd Mind, shall find himself much more enclined to believe the Primitive Church used at some times to Kneel (as we do) at the Holy Communion, than that they never did Kneel at all, or that such a Posture was never used nor heard of, but excluded from their Congregations, as some great Advocates for Sitting have confidently proclaimed it to the World.

(2.) But secondly, Suppose they never did kneel as we do, yet this is most certain, that they received the Lord's Supper in an adoring Posture; which is the same thing, and will sufficiently justify the present Practice of our Church, as being agreeable to that of pure Antiquity. For the Proof of this, numerous Testimonies both of Greek and Latin Fathers might be alledged, but I will content my self (and I hope the Reader too) with a few of each sort, which are so plain and express, that he who will except against them, will also with the same Face and Assurance except against the Whiteness of Snow, and the Light of the Sun at Noon-day.

And

And first for the Greek Fathers, let the Testimony of St. Cyril* be heard, than which nothing can be more plain and expresse to our purpose. This holy Father in a place before-cited, gives Instructions to Communicants, how to behave themselves when they approach the Lord's Table, and that in the Act of receiving both the Bread and the Wine.

At the receiving of the Cup he advises thus: † *Approach (says he) not rudely stretching forth they hands, but bowing thy self, and in a posture of Worship and Adoration, saying Amen.* To the same purpose St. Chrysostom speaks in his Fourteenth Homily on the first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he provokes and excites the Christians of his time to an awful and reverential Deportment at the Holy Communion, by the Example of the Wise Men, who adored our Saviour in his Infancy, after this manner: *This Body the Wise men reverenc'd even when it lay in the Manger, and approaching thereunto, worshipped it with fear and great trembling, Matth. 2. 1, 11. Let us therefore who are Citizens of Heaven, imitate at least these Barbarians. But thou seest this Body not in a Manger, but on the Altar; not held by a Woman, but by the Priest, &c. Let us therefore stir up our selves, and be horridly afraid, and manifest a much greater Reverence than those Barbarians, least coming lightly, and at a venture, we heap fire on our Heads* ||. In another place the same Father expressly bids them to *fall down and communicate* **, when the Table was prepared, and the King himself

* St. Cyril, Hierosol. Mystag. Catech. 5. versus finem. Paris. edit. p. 244

† Κύπλων, καὶ τεθ' ἔρω, προσκυνήσεις καὶ σέβασμα ἴθι, λέγων τὸ Ἀμὲν. p. 245. A.

|| Διανασήσωμεν τοίνυν ἑαυτοὺς, καὶ φοβώμεθα καὶ πολλῶν τῶν βαρβάρων ἀκρίνων πλείονα ὅτι φοβώμεθα τὸν ἐυλαβεῖαν, ἵνα μὴ ἀπλῶς, μηδὲ ὥς ἔπρεπε, προσελθόντες πρὸς τὸν ἐν τῶν σωζόμενων κεφάλαιον

4 Hom. Ep. ad Cor. p. 538. T. 9. Paris.

2 ** Ἀνάπτειν καὶ μένειν.

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self present : and in order to beget in their Minds great and awful Thoughts concerning that holy and mysterious Feast, he further advises them, **That when they saw the Chancel doors opened, then they should suppose Heaven it self was unfolded from above, and that the Angels descended, to be Spectators, I suppose he means, of their Carriage and Behaviour at the Lord's Table, and by giving their Attendance to grace the Solemnity. With the Testimony of these ancient † Writers Theodoret concurs, who in a Dialogue between an Orthodox Christian and an Heretick, introduces Orthodoxus thus discoursing concerning the Lord's Supper. The mysterious Symbols or Signs in the Sacrament (viz. Bread and Wine) depart not from their proper Nature, for they abide in their former Essence, and retain their former Shape and Form; and approve themselves both to our sight and touch to be what they were before : || but they are considered for such as they are made, (that is with respect to their Spiritual Signification, and that Divine Ule to which they were consecrated) and are believed and adored as those very things which they are believed to be. Which words clearly import thus much, that the consecrated Elements were received with a Gesture of Adoration, and withal assure us, that such a carriage at the Sacrament was not built upon the Doctrine of Transubstantiation. For there is not a clearer instance in all Antiquity against that absurd Doctrines which the Church of Rome so obstinately believes at this Day, that what Theodoret furnisheth us with in the words above-mentioned. Lastly, (to produce no more out of the Greek Fathers) that*

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* St. Chrys. Hom. 3. in Ep. ad Ephes. in moral. p. 1551.

† Flor. A. D. 440.

|| Νοῦν ὃ ἀπὸ ἐκείνου καὶ μεταβάλλεται, καὶ μετασχηματίζεται. ὡς ἐκείνου οὐκ ἐστίν, ἀπὸ μεταβάλλεται. Dialog. 2. Tom. 4. p. 85. Paris. Edit.

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Story which *Gregory Nazianzen* relates concerning his Sister *Gorgonia**, will serve to corroborate what hath been said, viz. That being sick, and having made use of several Remedies to no purpose, at last she resolved upon this Course: In the stillness of the Night she repaired to the publick Church, and being provided with some of the consecrated Elements which she had reserved at home, *she fell down on her knees before the Altar*, and with a loud voice supplicated him whom she adored, and in conclusion was made whole. I am not much concerned whether the Reader shall think fit to believe or censure the Miracle; but it's certain, that this famous Bishop hath put it upon Record, and applauds his Sister for the Method she used for her Recovery, and which speaks home to my Purpose; it's clearly intimated that this pious Woman did kneel, or use an adoring Posture at least when she eat the Sacramental Bread. And there is no doubt to be made but *Gorgonia* in communicating observed the same Posture that others generally did in publick. She did that in her Sickness, which all others were wont to do in their Health, when they came to the Lord's Table, i. e. fell down and kneel. For it is not to be imagined that at such a time as this, when she came to beg so great a Blessing at God's Hands in the publick Church at the Altar, styled by the Ancients *The Place of Prayer*, she would be guilty of any irregularity, and used a singular Posture different from what was generally used by Christians when they came to the same Place to communicate and pray over the great Propitiatory Sacrifice; which they esteemed the most powerful and effectual way of Praying, the most likely to render God propitious, and

* *Gregor. Naz. Orat. in laud. Gorg. p. 187. Paris. edit. Gr. gor. Dom. Flor. Ann. 370.*

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and to prevail with him above all other Prayers which they offered at any other time, or in any other place. So much for the Testimonies of the Greek Fathers, who were Men famous for Learning and Piety in their Generations, and great Lights and Ornaments in the Ancient Church. With these the Latin Fathers perfectly agree in their Judgments concerning our present Subject. And of these I will mention two (though more might be produced) for Brevity sake, and they very eminent and illustrious Persons, held in great esteem by the then present Age wherein they flourish'd, and by all succeeding Generations. The first is St. *Ambrose* Bishop of *Milan*, in a Book he wrote concerning the Holy Spirit, * where enquiring after the meaning of the Psalmist, when he exhorts Men to exalt the Lord, and to worship his Foot-stool, he gives us the Sense in these Words: That it seems to belong unto the mystery of our Lord's Incarnation; and then proceeds to shew for what reason it may be accommodated to that Mystery; and at last concludes thus; † *By the Footstool therefore is the Earth to be understood, and by the Earth the Body of Christ, which at this day too we adore in the Sacrament, and which the Apostles worship'd in the Lord Jesus, &c.* On the very same Word's St. *Austin* (Bishop of *Hippo*) comments, and to the same purpose. For thus he resolves that Question, How or in what Sense the Earth his Foot-stool may be worshipped without impiety? *Because he took Earth, of the Earth, for flesh is of the Earth; and he took flesh of the flesh of Mary. And because he conversed here in the flesh, and gave us his very flesh to eat unto Salvation. Now there*

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* Flor. A. D. 370. Pf. 98. & 995. in our Transl. *Ambrosi de Sp. Sto. l. 3. c. 12.*

† Itaque per Scabellum terra intelligitur, per tetram autem caro Christi, quam hodie quoque in mysteriis adoramus, & quam Apostoli in Dom. Jesu. adorarunt.

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is none who eateth that flesh, but first worshipping. We have found then how this Footstool may be adored; so that we are so far from sinning by adoring, that we really sin if we do not adore.* In the Judgment therefore of these Primitive Bishops, we may lawfully adore at the Mysteries, though not the Mysteries themselves; at the Sacraments, not the Sacraments themselves; the Creator in the Creature which is sanctified, not the Creature it self: as a late † Protestant Writer of prime Quality and Learning among the French, distinguishes upon the forecited Words of St. Ambrose.

From these few Instances I think it appears evident, that the Primitive Christians used an adoring Posture at the Sacrament in the Act of Receiving. It were casie to heap together many other Witnessess, if it were necessary so to do, either to prove or clear the Cause in hand: but since there is no need to pester the Discourse with numerous References and Appeals to Antiquity, would but puzzle and obscure the Argument, and tend in all likelihood rather to confound and disgust, than convince and gratifie the Reader.

By what hath been alledged, the Practice of our Church in Kneeling at the Sacrament is sufficiently justified, as agreeable to the Customs and Practice of pure Antiquity. For if the Ancients did at the Sacrament use a Posture of Worship and Adoration, (which that they did is very plain) then Kneeling is not repugnant to the Practice of the Church in the first and purest Ages; no, though we should suppose that Kneeling was never practised among them: which will appear, if we cast our eyes a little upon that heavy Charge which some of the fiercest, but less prudent Adversaries of Kneeling have drawn up against it. They
object

* *Nemo carnem illam manducat, nisi prius adoraverit.*

† *Phil. Mornay du Pléssis de Missa, l. 4. c. 7. p. 732.*

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object against Kneeling, as being an adoring Gesture? for they affirm, * *That to kneel in the act of Receiving, before the consecrated Bread and Wine, is formal Idolatry.* So also to kneel before any Creature as a memorative object of God, though there be no intention of giving Divine Adoration to that Creature, is Idolatry. Now if the Primitive Christians may be supposed to prostrate themselves before the Altar upon their first approach thither in order to receive, or immediately after they had received the Bread and the Cup from the Hand of the Minister; or if they bowed their Heads and Bodies after a lowly manner, in the act of Receiving; or if they received Standing upright, and eat and drank at the Lord's Table with their Hands and Eyes lifted up to Heaven; then they were guilty of Idolatry, as well as we who kneel at the Sacrament, in the Judgment of those *Scotch Casuists*; and consequently, Kneeling at the Holy Communion, according to the Custom of our Church, is not contrary to the Practice of the Church of Christ in the first and purest Ages. For all those Postures before-mentioned were Postures of Worship and Adoration, and used as such by the Primitive Christians; especially standing, which is allowed by the Patrons of sitting, to be anciently and most generally used in time of Divine Worship, and particularly in the act of Receiving †.

I will conclude all with an Instance in their own Case about a common Table Gesture. Suppose the Primitive Christians did in some places receive the Holy Sacrament sitting, or lying along upon Beds, as the ancient Custom was in those Eastern Countries,
at

* *Gillesp.* p. 166. 172. *Altar. Damas.* p. 801. *Rutherf. Divine Right of Ch. Gov.* c. 1. Qu. 5. Sect. 1. 3.

† *Gillesp.* *Disp. against E. Po. Cer.* p. 191. *Disp. of Kneel:* p. 93.

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at their common and ordinary Tables : Put the Case that in other Places they sate cross-legg'd on Carpets at the Lord's Supper, as the Turks and Persians eat at this day ; or that they received standing in other Places, according to the common mode of Feasting ; which we will suppose only at present. Could any Man now reasonably object against the lawfulness of sitting upright at the Sacrament upon a Form or Chair (according to the Custom of *England*) as being contrary to the Practice of all Antiquity, who never sate at all ? Certainly no. For though they differ from the Ancients as to the site of their Bodies, and the particular mode of Receiving, yet they all agree in this, that they receive in a common Table Gesture : They all use the same Gesture at the Sacrament, that they constantly used at their Civil Feasts and ordinary Entertainments in the several places of their Abode. And so say I in the present Case ; What though the Primitive Christians stood upright some of them at the Sacrament, and others bowed their Heads and Bodies in the act of Receiving, and none of them ever used Kneeling ? Yet they and we do very well agree for all that, because we all receive in an adoring or worshipping Posture. It is one and the same thing variously expressed, according to the Modes of different Countries.

QUERY

QUERY V.

Whether it be unlawful to Receive Kneeling, because this Gesture was first introduced by Idolaters, and is still notoriously abused by the Papists to idolatrous Ends and Purposes?

ALL that is needful to be said for Satisfaction in this Case, may be comprized under these two Propositions, which I will endeavour to make good.

(1.) It can never be proved that Kneeling in the Act of Receiving was first brought in by Idolaters, as is pretended and supposed in the Question.

(2.) That it is not sinful to use such Things and Rites as either have been or are notoriously abused to Idolatry.

As to the first of these Propositions, I have in my Answer to the fourth Question, made it (I think) appear very probable, *That the Church of Christ in the first and purest Ages did kneel, as we do at this day, in the Act of Receiving.* And if this be allowed, then they who oppose Kneeling will be unavoidably driven upon one of those two things: Either they must pronounce the Primitive Christians guilty of Idolatry, or not guilty. If they say *they* were Idolaters, then the former Objection against Kneeling contain'd in the fourth Query is void of all Sense, and falls to the Ground; *viz. That kneeling is contrary to the general Practice of pure Antiquity.* If they were clear from Idolatry, then the present Objection comes to nothing

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thing ; viz, That kneeling is unlawful, as being first introduced by Idolaters.

But secondly, to come close to the Question, let us try if we can find the time *when*, and the idolatrous Persons *by whom* Kneeling was first brought into Practice. And surely there are none so likely to inform us, as they who raise the Objection ; for if they do not make out these Particulars, they talk at random, and say nothing to the purpose. And what are the clear and undeniable Proofs (for such I am sure they ought to be in this Case) which they produce to make good this Charge against Kneeling? No other than these, that I can find by my best search into the Writings of the most Learned Advocates for sitting : * *Kneeling in the Act of Receiving the Eucharist was not known to the Church for a thousand years, &c. It was never known to the Church and Fathers before that monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation sprung up and grew strong in the world. It was instituted by Antichrist and that in honour of the Brethren God, and to confirm the Doctrine of Transubstantiation and the Carnal Presence.* Nay the same Author affirms, that this Gesture *was never used before the time of Honorius* ; and Challenges all the world to produce one Testimony before that Age for the use of it ; and withal acknowledges at the same time, that *Honorius did not institute Kneeling in the Act of Receiving.*

This is *Didoclarve* alias *Calderwood* his Account ; which is so blind and confused, and inconsistent with it self, that it proves nothing, but that the Author had a great mind to say somewhat to the purpose, but knew not what or how. It was unknown, he saith, to the Church for a thousand Years ; and again, not known till Transubstantiation sprung up and

* Altar. Damascen. p. 542. c. 9. de Adiaph. Id. c. 10. p. 780.
782. 784.

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and grew to maturity ; and again, never used till the time of Pope *Honorius*, who lived about the beginning of the Thirteenth Century, and came to the Papacy in the Year 1216. Now 'tis strange to me how Kneeling at the Sacrament should be known about a Thousand years after Christ, and yet never used till the year 1216, or thereabouts : This is all one with saying, Playing upon Organs was never heard of nor known till the Reign of King *Henry* the Seventh, but then Organs were never play'd upon till King *James* came to the Crown. And then again, though Kneeling was brought in by Antichrist, it was not brought in by *Honorius*, but in his time only. All the light therefore that this Author (who hath taken as much Pains, and shewed as much Learning as any Man whatsoever in defence of sitting) affords us, is only this : That Kneeling was brought in at some time or other, but he could not well tell when ; and by somebody or other, what do ye call him ; but it's uncivil to name Names.

The other Adversaries of Kneeling are very bold in their general, Charge as any Men can be, but very shy of coming to Particulars. * *The Man of Sin* was the Author and (to make all sure) the Mother of it, says one. It grew first from the Perswasion of the Real Presence, and this when Antichrist was at his full height, says another. And in the grossest time of Idolatry that the Eye of the Christian World hath seen. If when *Honorius* (as the Disputer proceeds) made his Decree for adoring the Sacrament, Kneeling were not in use, what follows from hence ? Why then in all probability Kneeling at the Communion was not received into Practice in any Age preceding the days of *Honorius*. But when *Honorius* made his Decree for Adoring the Sacrament,

Kneeling

* *Disp. against, Kneeling* p. 99. *Abridg.* p. 30, 31.

† *Disp.* p. 99. p. 94.

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Kneeling was not in use: That is, If Kneeling were not in use when *Honorius* made his Decree, then it never was in use before. What shifts are Men put to, when they undertake to defend an ill Cause? Who is there so ignorant, as not to know that things may grow out of Fashion and Use? What for some Ages was a general and prevailing Custom, may in tract of time wear off, and dwindle to nothing. I need say no more to expose the weakness of this Argument than to put it thus: Sitting was not in use in the time of *Honorius*, therefore in all probability it was never in use in any preceding Age.

After all too, it's strange that Kneeling at the Sacrament should spring (as these Writers affirm) from that monstrous Doctrine of Transubstantiation and a Conceit of the Corporal Presence of Christ, and not be in use in the days of *Honorius* when he made the Decree of Adoration. Because that Doctrine had been disputed many Years before, among Learned Men, and was established by Papal Authority in the Year 1215, before *Honorius* was elected Pope. But to pass by this, it appears from the Writings of these Men, that they unanimously agree in this: Kneeling was brought in by the *Man of Sin*, by *Antichrist*, after *Transubstantiation* sprung up, and in the time of *Honorius* the third. They all agree to, in talking confidently and at large concerning this Matter, without all Reason or Proof to make out their Assertion, but it is so, and it must needs be so, right or wrong; and the common People swallow all for Gospel, and have got *Honorius* his Name by the end, and so the matter is determined.

However, thus much I think is gained in favour of Kneeling, from what these our great Adversaries say against it, *That it was not introduced by any Pope of Rome.* For when they say the *Man of Sin* was the Mother of Kneeling, and *Antichrist* brought it in; if they mean by those Phrases (as they generally in their

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their other Writings do) the Pope or the Bishop of Rome, then the matter is out of Doubt, they themselves being Judges. Because they expressly affirm, that Kneeling was never practised before Pope *Honorius* his time *; and even then it was not instituted by him, but by some-body else. But if by the Man of Sin and Antichrist, they mean any Number or Society of Men, as the Conclave of Cardinals, suppose, or some prevailing Faction in a Provincial or General Council, spurr'd on by Avarice and Ambition to enlarge and support the Popes Authority; then it's very strange, and unaccountable, that their Constitutions and Decrees for Kneeling should no where be found, nor the least mention made in any Records or Histories concerning such a Matter. That there are none such to be met with any where, I will appeal to † Mr. *Prynne* as good a Terrier as ever lived, and no Friend to Kneeling. *There is not one Canon to be found (says he) made by any General, National, Provincial Council or Synod, from Christs institution of the Lord's Supper, till above 1460 years after his Assention: Nor any one Rubrick in all the Liturgies, Writings of the Fathers, or Missals, Breviaries, Offices, Pontificals, Ceremonials of the Church of Rome it self, that I could either find upon my best search, or any other yet produced, enjoining Communicants to Kneel in the Act of Receiving.* Thus that inquisitive Gentleman assure us; and in the same place backs his Report with the Authority of the Reverend Dr. *Burges*, whom he stiles the best and eminentest Champion for this Gesture of Kneeling of all others. The sum of what Dr. *Burges* delivers concerning this matter, is this: † That Kneeling

* *Disp* p. 81. *Altar. Dam.* p. 784. c. 10.

† Mr. *Prynne* *Apol. for lib. to tender Con.* p. 75. Printed 1662.

‡ Dr. *Burges. Ans. rejoy. to the Reply to Dr. Mort. gen. Defence,* p. 478. 479. *Missal. Rom. in the Rubr. set out by Pius V.*

ing in the act of Receiving was never any instituted Ceremony of the Church of Rome, nor is at this day. For this he cites *Bellarmino* and *Durantus*, who make no mention of Kneeling in the Act of Receiving; tho' they treat particularly of the Mass, and the Ceremonies of the Roman Church. Instead of this, *Durantus* affirms, *That the Sacrament ought to be taken Standing; and proves it also.* And so doth the Pope himself receive it, when he celebrates; and every Priest by order of the Mass-Book, is to partake standing reverently at the Altar, and not Kneeling there. The People which receive not, as well as they that do receive, are Reverently to bow themselves to the Sacrament, not when they receive it, but when the Priest doth elevate the Patten or Chalice for Adoration, or when the Host is carried to any sick Person, or in Procession. And this is that Adoration which was first brought in by Pope *Honorius* the Third, and not any Kneeling or Adoration in the Act of Receiving. For these are the very words of the Decree: *That the Priest should frequently instruct their People to bow themselves reverently at the Elevation of the Host, when Mass was Celebrated, and in like manner when the Priest carried it abroad to the sick.* At the last the Doctor thus resolves upon the Question: * *That Kneeling in the Act of Receiving was never any instituted Ceremony of the Church of Rome, nor ever used when it was used by them, for Adoration to the Sacrament, as is falsely believed and talked of by many.* And with him a learned Papist agrees, who in a Book purposely written for the Adoration of the Sacrament, declareth, *That it is not much material in what Gesture it is per-*

* Ut Sacerdotes frequenter doceant Plebem suam, ut cum Elevatur Hostia Salutaris, quisque se reverentur inclinet. Idem faciens quum eam deferat Præbyter ad infirmum. Decret. Greg. l. 3. tit. 41. c. 10.

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performed, whether *Sitting, Standing, Lying or Kneeling* *: And in the same place further informs us, that the Kneeling Gesture had not obtained in the Church of *Lyons* in the year 1555 ; and when some endeavoured to obtrude it upon that *Metropolis*, a stop was put to their proceeding by the Royal Authority.

Nothing needs more be said to give satisfaction in this matter, and fix us, when we have added what a very great Man of our own Church now living hath delivered in writing, † *viz. Although Kneeling at the Elevation of the Host be strictly required by the R. Church, yet in the Act of Receiving it is not ; as manifestly appears by the Popes manner of Receiving, which is not Kneeling, but either Sitting as it was in Bonaventure's time ; or after the fashion of sitting, or a little leaning upon his Throne, as he doth at this day.*

And now the matter is brought to a fine pass ! How outrageous have the Adversaries of Kneeling been in their Clamours against the Church of *England*, for appointing a Gesture that was first introduced and used by Antichrist and Idolators ; and when the matter comes to be sifted, not the least proof is produced to make good the Accusation ; but on the other side, it appears that those two Postures which are so earnestly contended for by our Dissenting Brethren, are the very Postures which the Man of Sin uses at this day himself in the Act of receiving the Holy Sacrament ! When he celebrates Mass himself, and upon some other particular and solemn Occasions, he stands || ; but generally and ordinarily he receives Sitting, or in a Posture very like it.

* *Espeuseus* de Adorat. Euch. lib. 2. c. 16.

† Dean of St. Paul's Unreasonableness of Separation, p. 15.

|| *Vid* Dr. *Falk.* lib. Eccles. p. 484, 485. Dr. *Burg.* lawfulness of Kneel. p. 67.

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it. And this I desire may be remembred, against we come to discourse on the second Head, viz. that Kneeling is not therefore sinful, because it is used by Idolaters.

If any should after all put the Question thus to me: When is it, say you, that Kneeling first commenced in the World; by whose Means, and upon what Reasons? My plain Answer is, I cannot certainly tell; nor can I find any account thereof among the ancient Records. But this is no Argument *against*, but rather *for* the ancient and universal Use of this Gesture: Novel Customs are easily traced to their Originals, but generally the most ancient Usages of every Country are without Father and Mother; and we cannot tell from what source they are derived.

(2.) I am so far from thinking (as our Dissenting Brethren do) that Kneeling owes its birth to the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, that I verily believe the contrary: viz. Kneeling, or an adoring Posture used by the ancient Christians in the Act of Receiving, did very much (among other things) conduce to beget and nurse up in the Minds of Superstitious and Phansiful Men, a Conceit, that Christ was really and corporally present at the Sacrament; which Notion, by subtil and inquisitive Heads, was in a little time improved and explained after this manner: That after the Elements of Bread and Wine were consecrated, they were thereby changed into the Substance of Christs natural Body and Blood.

This I am sure of, that the Patrons of Transubstantiation did very early make use of this very Argument, to prove that they taught and believed no more than what the Primitive Bishops and Christians did. For what else could they intend or mean (say they) by that extraordinary Reverence and Devotion which they manifested when they received the dreadful Mysteries (as they called the Bread and Wine)

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If they were bare and empty Signs only, and not changed into the very Body and Blood of Christ? which is in effect the very Argument used by * *Algerus* a stout Champion for Transubstantiation. And † *Cosmor* another Popish Writer, is so far from saying the Pope introduced it, and that after Transubstantiation took place, that he resolves it into an ancient Custom continued from the Apostles times.

Seeing then upon the whole matter it appears by the Confession of some who oppose Kneeling, that *Honorius* did not institute or ordain that Gesture in the Act of Receiving; seeing the Decree which he made, and which others appeal to, doth not at all relate to this matter, but only to the Adoration of the Host at the Priests elevation of it; seeing no other Pope is alledged as the Author of this Custom; seeing kneeling was never any instituted Ceremony in the Church of *Rome*, nor is there any Canon or Decree or Rubrick extant which requires the use of that Gesture; seeing the Pope himself, and the Priests who celebrate, use another Gesture in the Act of Receiving; seeing their own Writers look on it as an ancient Usage derived to them from the first and purest Ages: it follows, that what is pretended and supposed in the Question, is without all warrant and proof, viz. That kneeling in the Act of Receiving was first brought in by Idolaters.

And

* A Monk of *Corbie*, who wrote against *Berenger*, and lived about the year 1074. *Cassa enim videtur tot hominum huic Sacramento ministrantium vel adorantium veneranda sedulitas, nisi ipsius Sacramenti longe major crediretur, quam videretur veritas & utilitas; cum ergo exterius, quasi nulla sint quibus tanta impenduntur venerationis obsequia, aut insensari sumus, aut ad intima mittimus magna salutis mysteria.* *Alger de Sacramentis*, lib. 2. c. 3.

† *Cosmor*. *Enchirid* p. 353. edit. 1590.

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And now to close up all, I will appeal to any Man of Sense and Understanding, whether this be not a very silly and extravagant way of Arguing? Kneeling in the Act of Receiving is sinful, because it was first introduced by *Antichrist* and the *Man of Sin*, and that after the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* was started and took place in the World; and yet after all (when you come up close to them, and enquire into Particulars) they are not able to date the original of it, nor name the Authors who first invented it and set it up. At this rate of talking, it was the easiest matter imaginable to evince that sitting and Standing were equally unlawful with Kneeling. For it is but affirming boldly that they were first brought in and used by *Idolaters*, and then the work is done effectually. And if such slender Objections must drive us away from the Lord's Supper, we shall never communicate as long as we live.

But besides the folly of such Arguments, I think it's a very wicked thing for Men to invent and urge them, as the Case stands with us at present: For what is there more desired and wish'd for by all good Christians, than Brotherly Love and Concord? than that we may all meet together with one accord, in one place, and with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God in the publick Churches? What more talk'd of now-a-days then *Peace* and *Union*? Whosoever therefore shall any ways obstruct so blessed and desirable a work, must be concluded a very ill Man. And such a one (most certainly) is he (whatsoever we may think of it) who withdraws himself from the Holy Communion upon groundless Jealousies and unreasonable Fears of incurring the Divine Displeasure, if he receive Kneeling; and shall go about by the Bugbear words of *Idolaters*, *Antichrist*, the *Man of Sin*, to scare weak and honest Men from Receiving the Holy Sacrament in our Churches. Because the Lord's Supper was instituted for this peculiar End,

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among others, viz. to be an uniting Ordinance, to bind Christians together in the strictest bonds of Love and Friendship, to dispose and engage them to put on Bowels of Mercy, to exercise the most kind and tender Affections, and the most fervent Charity one towards another that is possible for Men to do. Those Nonconforming Ministers therefore who possess the People with these Arguments (which they themselves know, unless they be grossly ignorant, to be false and senseless) to render them averse from the Lord's Supper as it is administered in our Churches, are in plain English the *Authors* and *Fomenters* of our *Divisions*, and the *Disturbers* of our *Peace*.

In the Second place (to proceed) it is not unlawful to use such Things and Rites as either have been or are notoriously abused to Idolatry.

Before I produce my Reasons for the proof of this Proposition, I think it will not be amiss to inform the Reader with those Arguments which Dissenters use to overthrow it; and they are these two in general.

(1.) * *All Things and Rites which have been notoriously abused to Idolatry, if they were such as were devised by Man, and not by God and Nature made to be of necessary use, should be utterly abolished, and purged away from Divine Worship. But Kneeling in the Act of Receiving is one of these Rites; therefore it should utterly be abolished.*

(2.) † *To imitate and agree with Idolaters, by using such Rites and Ceremonies as they do, though in themselves indifferent, and though they contain nothing which is not agreeable to the Word of God, is sinful. So that not to abolish utterly whatsoever we know to have been*

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* *Giles's Eng. Pop. Cer. c. 2. par. 3. 130. Abridgment of Linc. Min. p. 17.*

† *Vid. Mr. Hook, Eccles. Pol. lib. 4. p. 160.*

used heretofore to Idolatry; to take up any old Heathenish and Idolatrous Customs and Rites, though at present disused by Idolaters, is sinful *: and then to use the same Rites with Idolaters at present, to fort our selves, and communicate with them in their Rites, is to partake of their Sins, and to become guilty of Idolatry too †.

With these Arguments they make a great noise, and endeavour to confirm them by Scripture and Reason. I shall not offer at a Confutation of these Proofs, which stand built upon a weak and sandy Foundation, upon trifling and sorry Reasons, upon Scripture Precepts, whose Sense is horribly wrested, and Scripture Examples falsely applied, and nothing to the purpose. There is a Case of Conscience lately published, whereing the Author hath done this work to my hands: For he clearly shews, * *That a Churches agreeing in some things with the Church of Rome, is no warrant for Separation from the Church so agreeing*: and particularly instanceth in our Churches agreement with the Church of Rome by Kneeling at the Sacrament. There you will find the most considerable Texts and Examples, which they drag from Scripture and urge for themselves, rendred utterly unserviceable to their Cause, and rescued from their Tortures.

All that I shall do therefore at present, is only this, briefly to propound my Reasons for the proof of my Assertion; by which I hope to make it evidently appear, that our Dissenting Brethren lie under a great Error and Mistake, by thinking that all those Rites and Ceremonies which are in themselves

* Gillesp. p. 141. c. 3.

† Altar. Dam. p. 536, 549.

|| Vid. Case resolved, whether the Ch. of Eng. Symbolizing, &c. p. 24. to p. 47. p. 38.

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selves indifferent, and of Man's devising, ought to be utterly abolished; and become sinful for us to use, purely because they either have been, or are notoriously abused to Idolatry. But here a few things must be premised, to prevent Cavils and Mistakes.

(1.) I take it for granted, that * indifferent things may be lawfully used in the Worship of God. This is supposed in the present Question; for otherwise it would be sinful in us to Kneel, whether that Gesture had been ever used or abused by Idolaters or no.

(2.) I grant that the Worship of God is to be preserved pure from all sinful Mixtures and Defilements whatsoever, whether of Idolatry or Superstition; and that things otherwise indifferent, which either in the Design of them that use them, or in their own present Tendency, do directly promote or propagate such Corruptions, do in that Case become things unlawful. To follow Idolaters in what they think or do amiss, to follow them generally in what they do, without other reason than only the liking we have to the Pattern of their Example, which liking doth intimate a more universal Approbation than is allowable; in these Cases I think, with the Reverend || Mr. *Hooker*, Conformity with Idolaters is evil, and blame-worthy in any Christian Church.

But excepting these Cases, it is not sinful or blame-worthy in any Society of Christians to agree with Idolaters in Opinion or Practice, and to use the same Rites which they abuse. And consequently, our Church is not to be blamed or charged with Idolatry, for her Agreement with the Church of Rome in using the same Ceremonies, unless it can be

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* See the Case of Indifferent Things.

† See Dr. *Fal.* lib Eccles. p. 443.

|| *Hook.* Eccles. Pol. 4. p. 165.

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proved that the Church of *England* doth abuse the said Ceremonies to sinful Ends ; or that the Ceremonies used or appointed by our Church, naturally tend to promote the Corruptions practised in the Church of *Rome*, and were ill design'd ; or that she did not follow the general Rules of God's Word, the Directions of the Holy Ghost in appointing and enjoining the use of Ceremonies, as being godly, comely, profitable ; but overlooking all this, had an eye purely to the Example of idolatrous Papists in what they did amiss.

Now this I am sure can never be made good against our Church, who hath sufficiently vindicated her self, by the open Declarations she hath printed to the World, from all Accusations of this Nature. Let but any Man consult the *Articles of Religion**, the *Preface* to the Book of *Common-Prayer* just after the *Act of Uniformity*, the two excellent Discourses that follow it concerning the *Service of the Church and Ceremonies*, and the Reasons she hath publish'd at the end of the Communion-Service for enjoining her Communicants to receive Kneeling ; I say, let any Man peruse these, and he will receive ample Satisfaction, that our Governours in Church and State in appointing the use of Ceremonies, did not steer by the Example of Idolaters, nor enjoin them out of any ill Design, or to any ill Ends ; but were conducted by the *Light of God's Word*, the *Rules of Prudence and Charity*, the *Example of the holy Apostles*, and the *Practice of pure Antiquity*.

These things being premised, I proceed to prove this Assertion : *That it is not sinful to use such Things and Rites as either have been or are notoriously abused to Idolatry : Or, which is all one, That to kneel in the Act of Receiving, according to the Custom of the Church*

* Art. 20. Art. 34. Canon 18.

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of England, is not therefore sinful, because it hath been and is notoriously abused to Idolatry, for these Reasons.

(1.) In general : No abuse of any Gesture, though it be in the most manifest Idolatry, doth render that Gesture simply evil, and for ever after unlawful to be used in the Worship of God upon that account. For the abuse of a thing supposes the lawful use of it; and if any thing otherwise lawful becomes sinful, by an abuse of it, then it's plain that it is not in its own Nature sinful, but by accident, and with respect to somewhat else. This is clear from Scripture; for if Rites and Ceremonies, after they have been abused by Idolaters, become absolutely evil, and unlawful to be used at all, then the Jews sinned in offering Sacrifice, erecting Altars, burning Incense to the God of Heaven, bowing down themselves before him, wearing a Linnen Garment in the time of Divine Worship, and observing other Things and Rites which the Heathens observ'd in the Worship of their false Gods.

No (say the Dissenters) we except all such Rites as were commanded or approved of by God, and such are all those fore-mentioned. But, say I, it's a silly Exception, and avails nothing. For if the abuse of a thing to Idolatry makes it absolutely sinful, and unlawful to be used at all, then it's impossible to destroy that Relation; and what hath been once abused must for ever remain so : that is, an infinite Power can't undo what hath been done, and clear it from ever having been abused. And therefore I conclude from the Command and Approbation of God, that a bare Conformity with Idolaters in using those Rites in the Worship of the true God, which they practise in the Worship of Idols, is not simply sinful, or formal Idolatry; for if it had, God had obliged the Children of *Israel* by his express Command to commit Sin, and to do what he strictly and severely prohibited in other places. In truth, such a Position would plainly make God the Author of Sin.

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(2.) This Position, *That the Idolatrous abuse of any thing, renders the use of it sinful to all that know it*, is attended with very mischievous Consequences and Effects.

First, It intrenches greatly upon Christian Liberty, as dear to our Dissenting Brethren as the Apple of their Eyes; and I wonder they are not sensible of it. At other times they affirm that no earthly Power can rightly restrain the use of those things which God hath left free and indifferent; and that those things which otherwise are lawful, become sinful when imposed and enjoined by lawful Authority: and yet these very Men give that Power to Strangers, both Heathens and Papists, which they take away from their own rightful Princes and lawful Superiors. An Idolater may yoke them, when a Protestant Prince must not touch them. And what more heavy and intolerable Yoke can be clapt upon our Necks than this, That another Man's abuse of any thing to Idolatry, though in it's own Nature indifferent, and left free by God, renders the use of it sinful? Whether this be not a violation of Christian Liberty, let St. Paul determine; who tells us, that *to the pure all things are pure*, 1 Cor. 10. 25, 27, 28, 29. and affirms it lawful to eat of such things as had been offered to Idols, and *to eat whatsoever was sold in the shambles*. And what reason is there why a Gesture should be more defiled by Idolaters, than Meat which they had offered up in Sacrifice to Idols? And why should one be Sinful and Idolatrous to use, and not the other? Certainly St. Paul would never have granted them such a Priviledge, if he judged it Idolatrous to use what Idolaters had abused; especially considering that he in the same Chapter exhorts them earnestly to *flee from Idolatry*, ver. 14.

Secondly, This Position subjects the Minds of Christians to infinite Scruples and Perplexities, and naturally

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naturally tends to reduce us to such a State and Condition, in which both the Jews and Gentiles were, before the glorious Light of the Gospel broke out upon the World: that is, it tends to beget and propagate a base servile Temper and Disposition towards God, and to fill us with Fears and Tremblings when we are engaged in his Worship and Service. Whereas the true and great Design of the Gospel, is to breed in Men a filial chearful frame of Heart, the *spirit of love, and of a sound or quiet mind* *; to give us a free, easie, and comfortable Access to God, as to our Father, and to encourage every good Man to a diligent, constant, frequent attendance upon the Duties of his Worship, by the Pleasure and Delight that follows them. But now, if nothing may be used by us without highly offending God, that either hath been, or is abused to Idolatry; who sees not what Trouble and Distraction will arise in our Minds hereupon, when we meet together to worship God? It's well known that most of our Churches were erected by *Idolatrous Papists*, and as much defiled by Idolatry as any Gesture can be; they are dedicated to several *Saints* and *Angels*, whose Images were once set up and adored. Our *Bells, Pews, Fonts, Desks, Church-yards*, have been consecrated after a superstitious Manner; many *Cups, Flagons, Dishes, Communion-Tables*, have been given and used by Idolaters. What now is to be done? If Kneeling at the Sacrament be sinful, because it hath been abused by Idolaters notoriously; so also it is sinful to use any other Thing or Rite that hath, if it be of Man's devising, as the afore-mentioned Writers limit the Question. If sitting were allowed by Authority, we could not come to the Publick Churches, nor to the Sacrament, nor Christen our

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* Rom. 8. 15. 2 Tim. 1. 7.

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Children for all that, if we know the Font and other Utenfils of the Church were once abused to Idolatry by Papists: We must first make a diligent search, and it certain Information cannot be had, we can't worship God in publick without panick Fears and great Disquiet of Mind.

But *Thirdly*, Such a Position as this will destroy all Publick Worship. For if nothing must be used which hath been, or is abused by Idolaters, it will be in the power of Idolaters, by ingrossing all the outward Marks and Signs of that inward Veneration and Esteem which we owe to God, to smother our Devotions, so as they shall never appear in the World; and by that means frustrate the very end and design of Religious Assemblies. And truly this work is already, by the strength of this Principle, very well affected. For *kneeling* at Prayers, and *standing* and *sitting*, and lifting up the Hands and Eyes to Heaven, and bowing of the Body, together with Prayer and Praise, and Singing, have been all notoriously abused to Idolatry, and are so at this day.

Obj. I know how it will be replied, That they except such things as are necessary to be used in the Service of God; it's absolutely necessary that we Worship God, and do him publick Honour; and whatsoever is necessary in order to this, may lawfully be used by us without Sin, though the same Gestures and Signs of Adoration are used and abused by Idolaters.

Answ. To this I answer, That this is cunningly, but not honestly and truly said. For the Reasons they give to prove that it is sinful to use the same Rites and Ceremonies with Idolaters at any time, prove it so at all times, and make it for ever so. So long as the Reasons hold to make any thing sinful, so long it is so. If the use or abuse of any thing by Idolaters make it simply Evil, then it must for ever remain so; and no necessity whatsoever can take it off, and make it lawful and innocent. If such Things and Ceremo-

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nies which are or have been used to Idolatry, become sinful in these by-respects, and for these Reasons, viz. * *Because they put us in mind of Idolatry, and preserve the memory of Idols*: and secondly, *Because they move us to turn back to Idolatry, and sort us with Idolaters*: then it will be ever sinful for us to use them. for these Reasons will hold good in things that are of necessary use in the Church, as well as in things that are not necessary: that is, nothing can hinder and destroy these Effects; they will ever mind us of and move us to Idolatry. And from hence I conclude that this Principle is a very false one, and ought to be laid aside. For it is attended with this Absurdity; it obliges us utterly to abolish, and forbids the use of all such Rites as have been notoriously abused to Idolatry in some Cases, for Reasons which eternally hold in all. So that at last it drives us into such streights, that we must Sin one way or other. For either we must not worship God in Publick, or we must be guilty of *Idolatry* if we do†: And though of two Evils or Calamities the least is to be chosen, yet of two Sins neither is. Christian Religion flows from infinite Wisdom; and the Laws of God do not cross one another, but are even and consistent. We are never cast by God under a necessity of sinning, of transgressing one Law by the observance of another; but thus it must be, if we take up and stick to this Principle.

(3.) Our Dissenting Brethren condemn themselves in what they allow and practise, by the same Rule by which they condemn Kneeling at the Sacrament, and other Rites of our Church. For they themselves did use, without scruple, such *Places* and *Things* and *Postures* as had been defiled and abused by *Idolaters*. They were wont to be bare-headed in
time

* See Gillesp. p. 128. 1. Reductive. 2. Participative
Quia Morient, Quia Morient. 134, 149.

† Gillesp. c. 3. p. 149.

time of Divine Worship, at Prayer, and at the Sacrament; and so do Idolatrous Papists: they never affirmed that it was sinful to kneel at our Prayers, both publick and private; yet this Gesture the Papists use in their Prayers to the *Virgin Mary*, to the *Cross*, to *Saints* and *Angels*. They used our Churches, Church-yards, and Bells, and never thought they sinned against God by so doing, though they knew they had been abused. Nay, the *Directory* declares, * *That such places are not subject to any such Pollution by any Superstition formerly used, and now laid aside, as may render them unlawful and inconvenient.* Mr. *Rutherford* saith of the Bells grossly abused in the time of Popery, *That it is unreasonable and groundless, that thereupon they should be disused†.* Upon which the Reverend Dr. *Faulkner* hath this judicious Remark: The pretence of their convenient Usefulness would be no better Excuse on their behalf than was that Plea for sparing the best of the *Amalekites* Cattle that they might be a Sacrifice, when God had devoted them to Destruction. For if God (as they say) hath commanded that all such Things and Rites should be utterly abolished as were of Man's devising, and had been abused to Idolatry; then the convenient usefulness of such Places and Things will never bear them out.

(4.) If it be sinful to kneel at the Sacrament, because that Gesture hath been and is notoriously abused by Papists to idolatrous Ends, so also is sitting, which is contended for with so much shew of Zeal. For the Pope himself sits in the Act of Receiving, as was before noted; and (if any credit be to be given to a Doctor of the Church of *Rome*) for the same reason which our Dissenters urge for sitting.

viz.

* Direct. of the day and place of Worship.

† *Rutherford*. of Scandal, Q. 5, 6.

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viz. because the Apostles sate at the first Institution and Celebration of the Sacrament. * *If any enquire why the Pope Receives Sitting, it may be replied, that he useth that Gesture in Remembrance of St. Peter and the other Apostles, who received the Body of our Lord at the last Supper Sitting.*

To conclude, If Kneeling be unlawful because it hath been abused to Idolatry, then we must never receive the Holy Sacrament: For we must receive in some convenient Posture, such as *Kneeling, Sitting, Discumbing, Standing*, and yet every one of these either have been or is notoriously abused by Heathens and Papists to Idolatrous Ends.

I have now finish'd what I undertook, and endeavoured all that in me lies, to satisfy all honest and peaceable Dissenters, that they may lawfully and innocently Kneel in the Act of Receiving the Holy Sacrament. What success this Discourse will have, I know not, but this I am sure of, It is well meant; and if it be read with the same *Charity* as it was written, with an *honest teachable Mind*, a Mind not pleased with its Scruples, I hope by God's Blessing it will do some good in the World. And really, if any of our Dissenting Brethren shall receive thus much satisfaction from what I have written, That by Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, they transgress no known *Law of God*, nor act contrary to our blessed Saviour's Example; That they do nothing but what becomes them, and is very suitable to the *nature of the Lord's Supper*, nothing but what is agreeable to the practice of the *universal Church* in the first and purest Ages; I don't see what other

* Si quæatur quare Dominus Papa Sedendo Communicat, potest dici, quod hoc sit in recordationem, quod Beatus Petrus & alii Apostoli sedendo Corpus Domini in Cœna ultima acceperunt, *Alex. Hales Tract. de Missa, Par. 2. Quest. 10. par. 4.*

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other Scruples about Kneeling should block up their way to the Lord's Table, and hinder them from communicating with us. There are a sort of Men, I confess, who separate from our Church, upon whom I despair of doing Good by any Attempts of this Nature; and they are such whose Scruples arise from a vicious Principle, not from the *weakness* of their Understandings, but the *Obstinacy* of their Wills; not from a great fear of offending God, which keeps pace with all their Actions (for such I have as tender a Compassion as any Man) but from *Humour, Self-conceit, Affectation of popular Applause*, and the being thought the wiser and better Men, for finding fault with every thing enjoined by lawful Authority, and every thing that is written in defence of it: Nor upon Men whose Scruples against *Government by Bishops*, the *Liturgy* and *Rites* of the Church, arise not from their *Consciences*, but their *Stomachs*, from *Pride* and *Ambition*, from private *Piques* and *Disappointments* in the *State*, from *Hypocrisie* and *Interest*, when the more they rail and except against Ceremonies, the better Trade they drive in the World: From such as these I expect nothing but Contempt and Derision, and that the Medicine will be turned into Poyson. For as a Great Man observes on *Prov. 14. 6.* *He that comes to seek after Knowledge with a Mind to scorn and censure, shall be sure to find matter enough for his Humour, but no matter for his Instruction**.

† For Kneeling I never heard any thing yet to prove it unlawful: If there be any thing, it must be either some Word of God, or the Nature of the Ordinance which

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* Lord Bacon Advan. of Learn. fol. p. 230.

† Mr. Baxter's Christian Directory, par. 2. p. 111. Quest. 3. Sect. 40.

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is supposed to be contradicted. But (1.) there is no Word of God for any Gesture, nor against any. Christ's Example can never be proved to oblige us more in this than in many other Circumstances, that are confessed not obligatory. As, that he delivered but to Ministers, and but to a Family, to Twelve, and after Supper, and on a Thursday-night, and in an upper Room, &c. and his Gesture was not such a Sitting as ours. And (2.) for the nature of the Ordinance, it is mixt: And if it be lawful to take a Pardon from the King upon our Knees; I know not what can make it unlawful to take a sealed Pardon from Christ (by his Ambassador) upon our Knees.

A DIS-

A
DISCOURSE
ABOUT
EDIFICATION.

In Answer to a QUESTION,
*Whether it is Lawful for any Man to forsake
the Communion of the Church of England,
and go to the separate Meetings, because he
can better Edifie there ?*

A Nswer, It is Unlawful.
To make this plain, two things must
be consider'd :
First, What sort of Person this is, who
asks this Question.

Secondly, What he means by Edification.

As to the Person, he is suppos'd to be one, that
is fully satisfied, that he may lawfully Communicate
with the Church of *England* ; That there are no
Terms of Communion put upon him, but which he
can comply withal with a good Conscience ; That
there is nothing in it contrary to the Word of God,
natural Reason, or plain Consequences fetch'd from
both or either. And therefore he who thinks, that
there are some things unlawful in the Communion
of the Church of *England*, is not concern'd in the
Question ; for he separates upon the Account of

Unlawfulness, and not Edification only, as is supposed in the Question.

Secondly, By Edification is meant, an Improvement of his spiritual Condition in the full Latitude, whereinssoever it may truly consist; whether in the Articles of his Faith, which in the separate Congregations are better taught, more clearly proved, more fitly appli'd to his Practice, and to support his Hopes of Heaven; or whether in the Rules of Life, which are there more exactly laid down, and more strongly enforc'd upon his Mind; or in Prayers, which among them are better composed, and more fervently sent up unto God; and in all other parts of Devotion, which there are better fram'd and order'd to affect his Soul, and make a truly Christian Man.

These two things being explain'd, and premised, the Answer to the Question will be found true, if we consider these following Reasons:

1. That the Ground upon which the Question stands is false, *viz.* There is not better Edification to be had in the Separate Meetings, than in the Communion of the Church of *England*.

This will appear, if we consider,

1. How apt and fit the whole Constitution of the Church of *England* is to edifie Mens Souls.

2. That this Constitution is well us'd and manag'd by the Pastors of our Church for Edification.

The first will be manifest by Induction, if we consider the several Parts of her Constitution, reducible to these following Heads:

1. Her Creeds or Articles of Faith are those which our Dissenters themselves allow; which are Full and Plain, containing all Necessaries and Fundamentals in Religion; nothing defective in Vitals or Integrals, to make up the Body of a true Christian Church. Christ that founded his Church, best knew what was absolutely necessary to her Being; and there is nothing that he hath declared to be so, but is contained in her Creeds.

Creeds. Whatever is Fundamental for us to know of the Nature of God, is to be found there, or by easie Consequences deduced from them. Would we know what we ought to believe of the Nature of Christ or his Offices, the Designs of his coming upon Earth, the Constitution of his Reign and Government, the Rewards and Punishments of his Laws, the Times of Account and Retribution, the mighty Miracles and extraordinary Acts of Providence to confirm these; we may read them at large in Holy Writ, and find wisely summ'd up in our Creeds. Whose Articles, to help the Memories of Men, are short and few; and to assist the dulness of their Understandings, are manifest and plain; they containing no more than what was some way or other, either suppos'd before, or included in, or following from that brief Creed, *the Character of a true Christian, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, 1 Joh. 4. 15. 5. 5. Whatever is any way revealed by God as necessary, is an Article of our Faith: Nothing that is nice and obscure, fit only for Dispute and Wrangling, is brought into our Creed; all whose Articles are Primitive and of Divine Right, none of them purely speculative or curious, but plain and useful, in order to Practice, naturally leading to an holy Life, the end of all Religion. We love every thing that is truly Ancient and Apostolical, but we cannot call that an eternal Truth which was but yesterday; and we are ready to embrace all Truth, but we cannot call that the High-Priest, which is but the Fringe of his Garment. We believe all that the early Christians in the first 300 Years thought sufficient for them to know (and they were very secure that this would save them). And if any Truth be disguis'd or defac'd by the iniquity of the descending Ages, we are ready to receive it, whenever it is made clear, and restor'd to its former Shape and Complexion, we casting out Obstinacy and Perverseness

ness out of our Practice, as well as Niceness out of our Creeds. That Creed that Christ and his Apostles taught, the Saints, Martyrs, and Confessors, the Wise and Good Men in the first and purest Days of Christianity believ'd, and were secure of Heaven by it, and therefore added no more ; that Faith this Church maintains, which will sufficiently and effectually edifie the Souls of Men.

2. The Necessity she lays upon a Good Life and Works. For this is the solemn intention of all Religion, our Creed, our Prayers, our Sacraments, and Discipline, and all Devotion. Her Creed is such, that all its Articles so directly, or by natural Consequence, lead unto Virtue and Holiness, that no Man can firmly believe them, but they must ordinarily influence his Manners, and better his Conversation; and if by vertue of his Creed his Life is not mended, he either ignorantly and grossly mistakes their Consequences, or is wilfully desperate. Our Church publicly declares, that without preparatory Virtues, no Acts of Devotion, however set off with Zeal and Passion, are pleasing unto God ; and if Obedience be wanting afterwards, are but Scene and Show. Such a Faith she lays down as Fundamental to Salvation, which rests not in the Brain and Story, in magnifying and praising, in sighing and repeating, but in the production of Mercy, Charity, and Justice, and such excellent Virtues. She makes no Debates between Faith and Good Works, nor argues nicely about the Preference, nor disputes critically the Mode, how jointly they become the Condition of Salvation, but plainly determines that *without Faith and Good Works no Man shall see God*. She not only keeps to a Form of sound Words, but to a Conversation of equal Firmness and Solidity. Her Festivals are to commemorate the Virtues of Excellent Men, and to recommend them as Presidents for imitation. Her Ceremonies, which were

principally designed for Decency, may also remind us of those Virtues which become the *Worshippers of God*. Her Collects and Petitions are for Grace to subdue our Follies, and to fortifie our Resolutions for Holiness. Her Discipline is to lash the Sturdy into Sobriety and Goodness : And her Homilies are plainly and smartly to declare against the gross Acts of Impiety, and to perswade a true Christian Deportment in word and deed ; and her whole Constitution aims at the Design of the Gospel, to teach Men to live *Soberly, Righteously, and Godly*. She flatters and lulls no Man asleep in Vice, but tells all secure Sinners plainly, that they do not Pray nor Receive aright, that they are not Absolved, that their Persons are not Justified, nor can have any true Hopes of Heaven, except they purifie themselves, and be really Just and Good. She neither useth nor allows any nice Distinctions in plain Duties, to baffle our Obedience, nor suffers a cunning Head to serve the Designs of a wicked Heart, and teach Men learnedly to Sin, but urgeth plain Virtues laid down distinctly in Holy Writ, and taught by natural Reason and Conscience (without calling them mean Duties, or ordinary Morality) to be the great Ornament of our Religion, and the Soul of our Faith. She sets no abstruse and phantastick Characters, nor any Marks, whose Truth must be fetch'd in by long Deductions and Consequences for Men to judge by, whether they shall be saved or no ; but Faith and good Works, which the Philosopher and meanest Christians can easily judge of. The Civil Interest of a Nation is edified by such a Church, pressing the Necessity of Good Works ; not only thereby enforcing Peace and Justice, Pity and Tenderness, Humility and Kindness, one towards another ; but she makes Kings safer and Subjects more secure, condemning both Tyranny and Disobedience ; Parents more obey'd and

and Subjects more lov'd, commanding equally Bowels and Affections, and Duty and Honour; Masters and Servants, Husbands and Wives, and all Relations, are kept in their just Bounds and Priviledges. With other Churches, we make good Works necessary to Salvation, but think our selves more modest and secure in taking away Arrogance and Merit, and advancing the Grace of Christ: With other Men, we cry up Faith, but not an hungry and a starved one, but what is fruitful of Good Works; and so have all that others contend for, with greater Modesty and Security.

3. How fitly this Church is constituted to excite true Devotion. When we make our Addresses unto God, we ought to have Worthy and Reverend Conceptions of his Nature, a true Sense and plain Knowledge of the Duty, and of the Wants and Necessities for which we pray to be supplied. All which our Church, to help our Devotion, plainly sets down, describing God by all his Attributes of Just, Wise, and laying forth the Vices and Infirmities of Humane Nature, and that none else but God can cure our Needs. When her Sons are to pray, the matter of her Petitions are not nice and controverted, trivial, or words of a Party; but plain and substantial, wherein all agree. Her Words in Prayer are neither rustick nor gay, the whole Composure neither too tedious nor too short; decently order'd to help our Memories and wandring Thoughts. Responsals and short Collects in Publick Devotion, are so far from being her Fault, that they are her Beauty and Prudence. There are few Cases and Conditions of Human Life, whether of a Civil or Spiritual Nature, which have not their proper Prayers and particular Petitions for them, at least as is proper for Publick Devotions. When we return our Thanks, we have proper Offices to enflame our Passions, to quicken our Resentment, to excite our Love, and to

confirm our future Obedience, the best instance of Gratitude. When we Commemorate the Passion of Christ, we have a Service fit to move our Affections, to assist our Faith, to enlarge our Charity, to shew forth and exhibit Christ and all his Bloody Sufferings, every way to qualifie us to discharge that great Duty. She hath indeed nothing to kindle an Enthusiastick heat, nor any thing that favours of Raptures and Extasies, which commonly flow from Temper or Fraud ; but that which makes us manly devout, our Judgment still guiding our Affections. When we first enter into Religion, and go out of the World, we have two proper Offices, Baptism, and Burial, full of Devotion, to attend those Purposes. So that if any doth not Pray, and give Thanks, Communicate, and Live like a Christian, 'tis not because the Services to promote these are too plain, and hungry, beggarly and mean, but their own Mind is not fitly qualified before they use them : Bring but an honest Mind to these Parts of Devotion, a true Sense of God, sober and good Purposes, and Affections well disposed, that which is plain will prove Seraphical, improve our Judgment, heighten our Passions, and make the Church a Choir of Angels : Without which good Disposition, our Devotion is but Constitution, or Melancholly Peevishness, Sullenness, or Devotion to a Party, a Sacrifice that God will not accept.

4. Her Order and Discipline. Such are the Capacities and Manners of Men, not to be taught only by naked Virtue, a natural Judgment, or an immediate Teaching of God ; but by Ministry and Discipline, decent Ceremonies and Constitutions, and other external Methods : These are the outward Pales and Guards, the Supplies and Helps for the Weakness of Humane Nature. Our Church hath fitted and ordered these so well, as neither to want or to abound ; not to make Religion too gay, nor leave her slovenly ; neither rude nor phantastick, but is
cloathed

cloath'd in Dresses proper to a manly Religion; not to please or gratifie our Senses, so as to fix there, but to serve the Reason and Judgment of our Mind. There are none of our Ceremonies, which good Men, and wise Men, have not judged decent, and serviceable to the great Ends of Religion; and none of them but derives themselves from a very ancient Family, being used in most Ages, and most of the Churches of God; and have Decency, Antiquity, and Usefulness, to plead for them, to help our Memories, to excite our Affections, to render our Services orderly and comely. Were we indeed all Soul, and such Seraphical Saints, and grown Men as we make our selves, we might then plead against such external Helps; but when we have Natures of Weakness and Passion, these outward Helps may be called very convenient, if not generally necessary; and as our Nature is mixt of Soul and Body, so must always our Devotion be here, and such God expects, and is pleased with. Our Church is neither defective in Power and Discipline (had she her just Dues; and others would do well to joyn with her in her wishes, that they might be restor'd) which would turn all into Confusion; nor yet tyrannical, want of Authority breeding as many, if not more Miseries than Tyranny, or too much Power, both of them severe Curses of a Nation. But her Government, like her Clime, is so well temper'd together, that the Members of this Christian Society may not be dissolute or rude with her, nor her Rulers insolent; being constituted in the Church with their different Names and Titles, not for Lustre and Greatness, and secular Purposes, but for Suppression of Vice, the maintaining of Faith, Peace, Order, and all Virtues, the true Edification of Mens Souls. And if those Vices are not reprov'd and chastis'd, which fall under her Cognizance, 'tis not the fault of her Power, but because by other ways ill restrained, unnecessary Divisions

from her hindring her Discipline upon Offenders, and so they hinder that Edification which they contend for. This Government is not Modern, Particular, or purely Humane, but Apostolical, Primitive, and Universal, to Time as well as Place ; till some private Persons, for Number, Learning, or Piety, not to be equall'd to the good Men of Old, who defended it, and obeyed it, and suffered for it, out of some mistakes of Humane Frailty and Passion, or born down with the Iniquities of the Times, began to change it, and declaim against it, though so very fit and proper to promote Christianity in the World. This is a general Account of that Edification that is to be had in that Church in which we live ; a more particular one would be too long for this Discourse : But thus much must be said, that examine all her particular Parts and Offices, you will find none of them light or superstitious, novel or too numerous, ill-dispos'd or uncouth, improper or burthensome, no just Cause for any to revolt from her Communion ; but considering the present Circumstances of Christianity, and Men, *the best constituted Church in the World.* If therefore Edification be going on to Perfection, or growing in Grace ; if it is doing good to the Souls of Men ; if it be to make plain the great things in Religion to the Understandings of Men* ; or whatever the import of it is, in relation to Faith or Virtue, which is the Condition of our Salvation, it is to be found in this Church, whose Constitution is apt and fit to do all this. And St. Jude seems to tell us, that true Edification was a Stranger to those who separated from the common Building. But those who kept to the Communion of the Church, built up themselves in their most holy Faith, and prayed in the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. 14. 19. And the honest Christian, with greater Assurance, may expect the Grace and Blessings of Christ, and the Divine Spirit, whose Promises

* Heb. 6. 1. 2 Pet. 3. 18. Rom. 15. 25. 1 Cor. 14. 3.

Promises are made to them, who continue in the Communion of the Church, and not to them who divide from the Body, and have greater Hopes of Edification from their Teacher, than the Grace of God, from *Apollos*, that waters, than from Christ, the Chief Husbandman, who gives the encrease.

2. This Constitution is used and managed in the best way, by the Pastors of our Church, to edifie the Souls of Men. This will appear, if we consider these two things :

1. That there are strict Commands under great Penalties laid upon the Pastors of our Church to do this, who are not left to their own Freedom and private Judgment, or the force only of common Christianity upon them, thus to improve Mens Souls committed to their Charge, but have Temporal Mulcts and Ecclesiastical Censures held over them, to keep them to their Duty; That when they do inform or direct their Flocks about their Belief, they should keep to the Analogy of Faith, or Form of sound Words; Or when they perswade to Practice, their Rules and Propositions must be according to Godliness. That whenever they Exhort or Rebuke, Preach or Pray; whenever they Direct, or Answer the Scruples of Mens Minds, in the whole exercise and compass of their Ministry, they are to have an Eye to the Creed; to regard Mercy and Justice, the Standard of *good Manners*; in short, to preserve Faith and a good Conscience with substantial Devotion, which will to the purpose edifie Mens Souls, and effectually save them.

2. That these Commands are obey'd by the Pastors of our Church, and they do all things in it to Edification. For the truth of this, we appeal to good Men, and wise Men, in the Communion of our Church, who have Honesty and Judgment to confess the Truth, and with gratitude acknowledge, that the Pastors of the Church of *England* have led

them into the Ways of Truth and Righteousness, cured their Ignorance, and reformed their Lives, and upon good Grounds given them an assurance of Heaven. To say such as these are prejudiced, and want Sincerity and Knowledge to pass a Judgment, is only to prove, what we justly suspect, that they want true Edification among themselves, and should be better taught the Doctrine of Charity. Our *Protestant* Neighbours, impartial Judges, will give their Testimony to this Truth, who have owned and commanded the Government of this Church, condemn'd the Separation, magnified the Prudence, Piety, and Works of her Governours and Pastours, and wish'd that they and their Charge were under such a Discipline, and translated many of their pious and learned Works, to edifie and save the People. Our Dissenting Brethren themselves (at least in the good Mood, and out of the heat of Dispute) give their consent to this, that the Instructions and Discourses of our Pastours from their Pulpits, are solid, learned, affectionate, and pious; and their only Crime was, that sometimes they were too well studied, and too good*. If in the great number of the *English Clergy*, some few may be lazy, one particular Person may cloath his Doctrine in too gay a dress, another talks scholastically, above the Capacity of his Hearers, a third too dully, a fourth too nicely and opinatively, and here and there a Pastour answers not the true Design of Preaching, to inform Mens Minds, to guide their Consciences, and move their Affections; what is this to the general Charge, That no Edification so good is to be had, as in the Separate Meetings, the pretended Cause of their Separation? For 'tis no more a true Cause, than want of Accommodation or Room in Churches, for some to separate, where good Edification and Conveniency too may be easily had. And since they compel our

Pastours

* The Unreasonableness of Separation, 117.

Pastours to speak well of themselves, by their detraction and speaking ill of them, they must *gladly suffer them as fools* (2 Cor. 11. 19) boldly to say, That since the Reformation, and many hundred years before, there hath not been a Clergy so Learned and Pious, so Prudent and Painful, and every way industrious to edifie and save the Souls of Men, as now is in the *English Church*.

The Second Argument to confirm the Answer, is, That those that usually make this pretence for Separation, do commonly mistake better Edification. We have proved already, that good and sufficient Edification, to save the Souls of Men, is to be had in the *English Church*: For if teaching plainly the Articles of Faith, and laying down clearly Rules of Manners, using well-composed Prayers, and proper Administration of Sacraments, be not good and sufficient Edification, I know not what Edification means: It may be heating of Fancy, stirring up of Humours, this, or that; and Men may as well define the thing they call Wit, as what Edification means. And therefore to desert the plain and great Duty of our Church-Communion, for disputable, doubtful, or truly mistaken Edification, is to be guilty of the Sin of Schism. In most Cases, to judge what is better or best, is very hard, and requires a sincere and considering Head; and so it is in the Business of better Edification, which is so easily mistaken, especially by the generality of the People, who are usually ignorant of such nice things, and prejudic'd by their Parties and Affections, and are *mutable and various, according to their Fancies*: For better Edification, purer Administrations and Churches, and things that are more excellent, absolute Perfection, and a less defective way of Worship, are hard to understand, perplex Mens Minds, and fill them with innumerable Doubts and Scruples, and put them upon refining and purging so long, till they
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weaken and destroy the Spirit of Religion. And so they run themselves into a known Sin, for dark and disputable Advantages ; which indeed are only Mistakes, and principally are these three that follow :

1. In taking nice and speculative Notions, for great and edifying Truths. When Doctrines have been rais'd only to please the Temper of the Curious and Inquisitive, yet have made many think their Hearts were warm'd when their Heads and Fancies are gratified ; And dark and obscure Discourses about Angels, the State of Separated Souls, and things of the like Nature*, have made some call the Preacher high and mysterious ; while others, teaching the Way of Salvation plainly, by Faith and a good Conversation, have been lessen'd, with the Character of Dull, Honest, and Moral Men, fit only for Catechists, and Christians of the lowest Form. Tickle but their Imaginations with conjectural Discourses about the Situation of *Paradise* of old, or *Hell* now, and you are a sounder Divine than he, that only draws wholesome Conclusions from *Adam's* Prevarication, to caution you against Sin of the like Nature, or how to avoid those dismal Flames where-ever they are. And others have been silly and phantastick in admiring those who have prated about the length of the Sword that guarded *Paradise*, or how the Spirits above pass Eternity away, and scorn'd him, who in plain Methods chalkt them out the way that will lead them to Heaven. The Ancient *Gnosticks*, because they made a mixture of the *Jewish* Fables and Genealogies †, of their *Lilith* and *Behemoth*, and fetch'd in the Stories of the Gods, out of *Orpheus* and *Philistion*, (two great Divines in the *Pagan Religion*) into plain Christianity, thought themselves the most knowing Men of the Secrets of God and Heaven, and wondred how

* Colof. 2. 18.

† 1 Tim. 1. 4.

how only Faith upon Jesus, and keeping of the Commands, could be knowing of God, or Wisdom from above. The Wranglings of the Schools, with their fine Distinctions and barbarous Terms, fitter for Magick than Christianity, by their Disciples have been prized for great and precious Truths. And Enthusiastick Raptures, and Flights, making once the Brain to swim, have snatch'd the Hearers beyond themselves, and then thought them the Dictates of the Spirit, and the Teachings of God; and the more dark and obscure the Doctrine hath been, the greater Illumination it was esteem'd, and call'd a Noon-day Thought, which was a Mid-night Dream. Such things as these pass with too many for Saving Truths, a great part of Mankind being ignorant in their Heads, and corrupt in their Practice, espous'd to Parties and Interests, having Constitutions and Passions fit for these, they readily swallow them down. The Apostle confirms the truth of this, telling us, *the time will come, when they will not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts shall they heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears,* 2 Tim. 4. 3. caused by some Disease of Vice within, which is not to be cured by good Physick, but only scratch'd and gratified; and if the Food, though wholesome and good, be not to their Palate and Fancy, they complain of Hunger and Starving. These and many more are the Instances of a weak and sickly Nature, craving only nice and curious Things for Spiritual Meat, and kecking at the sincere Milk of the Word, plain and substantial Truths, that it may grow thereby. To give therefore a liberty to every Man to run from an established Church, upon the account of better Edification, which is so often and easily mistaken, is to direct Men into Temptation and a Snare, and is dangerous and sinful; and when once the Gap is open, where will, especially the Vulgar, stop? May we not add, that this pretence,

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of better Edification is very fit to disguise and colour other Vices? When Controversies have unhappily risen, from an unjust Denial of the Ministers Rights and Dues, or the Accidents of civil Conversation, they make the Ministry, that was spiritual and good before, to be called dull and mean, and better must be sought elsewhere; whilst only Revenge or Covetousness is at the bottom; wandering Reports, or their own lavish Tongue, and censorious Temper, have called some Pastours Covetous, or Intemperate, or branded them with other Vices, and then cry out, they cannot edifie in such a Church; and so make one Fault help out another, and Defamation must excuse their Schism.

2. In taking the Opinions of Parties for undoubted Truths essential to Salvation. When Men have once wedded a Party, and the Opinions peculiar to it, they magnifie and propagate them, grow furious for their Defence, and call them the best part of Religion: And if these be not abetted, and cry'd up by the Pastours of our Church, or they differ from them in Explications and Distinctions of them, the way of Salvation is not taught, they do not improve their Spiritual Condition, and therefore is a just Cause of their Separation. Because the Notion of Explication of Faith and Spirit, Church and Grace, Justification, Regeneration, Conversion, Adoption, and other things of the like Nature, are generally different in our Church from those of the Separation, they therefore cry, we destroy the Saving Truths of the Gospel; and instead of being edified, they find themselves weakened in their Christian Faith. Tho'tis plain to all impartial Jndgments, that *their Sense and Interpretation* of them, by natural Consequences lessen the Grace of the Gospel, and give Security to lazy Sinners; a strange sort of Edification! For though our Charity is not so narrow, as to think every Man a vicious Person, who is thus mistaken in his Conclusions;

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ons ; yet however, this alters not the Nature of these Opinions, and their Consequences : And who knows how far Men of Ill Principles do improve them ? Such is the perverse and angry Temper of many about their own Opinions, no way necessary to Salvation, wherein wise Men and good Men may differ, which are not stated by Authority, and may not be determined till *Elias* come ; yet if these be not insisted on, and press'd with vehemency, the great Things of the Gospel are omitted, and Truths are wanting to their Perfection. And if once the People are possess'd with Opinions and Notions, they grow fierce about them, and call them Salvation-Truths, and run headlong into a Sea of Disorder and Tumult for their defence. The Disciples of the Fifth Monarchy, the Pretenders to the Spirit, the Enemies of *Childrens Baptism*, think themselves wrong'd, and the Gospel hidden, if casually they hear you making interpretations of the Kingdom of Jesus, the Operations of the Spirit, and that Divine Institution, different from their lewd Sense. And many Questions, when determin'd, after a great deal of Labour and Passion, and Expende of Time, may improve our Knowledge, but not Faith and a good Life, the only Edification. The early and best Christians thought themselves mighty Saints, and secure of Heaven, if they only knew *Jesus and the Resurrection* in their full extent ; and the World being such ill Judges about any other Edification, it would be well if they return'd to this good old way, and rest satisfied there, lest they take the Inventions of Men, Rhetorick or Subtlety, Secular Interest, or Conjectures, for the Pillars of the Temple, to support their Faith ; and so upon the score of Edification, break the Peace and Unity of the Church, and Obedience to our Governours, the great things of Religion.

3. In taking sudden Heats and Warmth for true Edification. When melting Tones, affectionate Expressions

pressions, solemn Looks and Behaviour, Passion and Vehemency, and other Arts, have play'd upon the Fancy, and put their Constitutions into different Motions, some have thought themselves so strangely edified, as tho' it was the impulse and powerful acting of the Divine Spirit; which many times is no more than a bright or a lowring Day can do, acting upon the Animal Spirits; and a Dose of Physick will do the same. And if they carry the Men no further, improve no Virtue in them, they are nothing else but downright Flesh and Blood: And they are hot and cold, high and low, very changeable and uncertain, according as the Humours flow, and as is the bodily Temper of the Men. Upon this account some are melted into Tears, and others are fired into Rage and Zeal; their Spirits, like Tinder, easily catching the flame: And these have happened in the worst of Men, serving only the Designs of Fury and Hypocrisie; and can no more be called Edification, than the Fire from the Altar, that may consume the Temple, Zeal. Yet such Mistakes as these have been too common; Anger and Revenge have been called Zeal for God; Trade and Interest have been baptized Christianity; Fury and Fumes of the Stomach have been thought the Divine Spirit; ridiculous Looks and unmanly Postures have been fancied true Acts of Devotion; and when they themselves were pleas'd, and in the good Humour, God was reconciled; and when they were dull and heavy, the Spirit was withdrawn; and according as these Heats and bodily Passions* were stirr'd, so the Ministry was edifying or unprofitable; pale Cheeks and hollow Looks have been counted Signs of Grace, and the Diseases of their Body pass'd for the Virtue of their Mind. And when a Doctrine hath been so insinuated, as to

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* Matth. 6. 16.

hit and favour these, they were strangely improved, and had obtain'd a good degree in Religion. Many of these may be Beginnings, or Occasions, leading unto Religion, and may serve some good Purposes in Men that can manage them well; but to cry up these for Edification, and going on unto Perfection, is to betray their People into the power of every Cheat and Impostor, who hath the knack to raise these Heats, which pass for Reason and Conviction of Mind; and most commonly are great Hindrances to solid and sound Reasoning, plain Discourses, the true way to Edification, to make firm and lasting Impressions upon the Mind; while the silly and weak, who are most subject to these Heats and Colds, the uncertain Motions of their Spirit, are fickle and inconstant, turning round in all Religions; such Men being all Sail, are more easily tost about with every wind of Doctrine.

3. Argument to confirm the Answer, is; That pretence of better Edification will cause endless Divisions in the Church. This Question doth suppose, that every Man must judge; and so great a part of the World being ignorant and vicious, partial and prejudic'd, false and insincere to themselves and others, they may run from Teacher to Teacher, from *Presbyterian* to *Independant*, from *Independant* to *Anabaptist* or *Quaker*, and never stop till they come at their Grave, to find out better Edification; *ever leaning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth;* 2 Tim. 3. 7. ever seeking and never satisfied, till they find the Pattern upon the Mount, or the new *Jerusalem* be come down from above; till they meet with such a perfect Church, as perhaps will never be here upon Earth, till her great Master comes. The Ignorant will easily mistake, and who can know the Heart and Intention of the False and the Hypocrite? And the Governour hath nothing to do here to retrench this Liberty, which as they pretend,
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is either born with them, or given them by God. At this rate, may not every single Person be a Church, leaving all other Christian Societies, fancying that he can better edifie at home with the Workings of his own Mind, and some pretended Infusions of the Spirit, that he shall better meet with in his Privacies and Retirements, then in an external and carnal Ministry and Crowd ? When once they have torn the Unity of the Church in pieces, and set up their more edifying Meetings, in comes whole shoals of Vices ; Envy and Detraction, Strife and Emulation, Murmurings and Complainings, Fierceness and Wrath, and a great number of things more, prejudicial to the State of the Kingdom, the Interest of Families, the Good of Friendship and all Civil Conversation ; a wonderful Edification, destroying the very Soul of Christianity ! The same Principles that divide them from this Church, will crumble them into endless Parties, and every little Chip may call it self a Building, and so destroy all good Government and Discipline, so necessary to propagate and preserve Christianity in the World. And should I live to see that fatal Day, when the Government in our Church should be dissolved, and Liberty given to every Man, upon pretence of better Edification, to choose his Pastour and his Church ; so many Mischiefs and Confusions would follow from it, that if there was any regard to common Christianity, or Sense of temporal Happineness left within their Breast, they would too late repent their Schism, (as once in a great degree many of them did) and beg upon their Knees, that the Pale of this Government in Church might be set up again, and they would receive it with all its pretended load of Impositions. This will certainly follow from dividing from the Church, to the laughter of *Rome*, and joy of all the Enemies of our Christian Religion. All this would be avoided, if Men were

sensible of the heinous Nature of Schism, which the Apostles and all the ancient Christians have painted forth in such black Colours, tho' others think our Divisions in the Church are no more, than variety of Companies and Liveries in a City.

4. What great Discouragement this is to an honest and truly Christian Ministry. When a Pastor of our Church shall diligently and faithfully, plainly and devoutly unfold the Articles of Faith, and lay down Rules for Practice, which will certainly bring him to Heaven; yet his Flock or Charge, one after another, upon pretence of greener Pastures, greater Knowledge, better Elocution, Delivery, Tone, or the like, to be had elsewhere, shall run from him; will it not cool his Zeal, check his Labours, and affront his Person and Office? This may be done to the painful as well as idle; the judicious and learned, as well as imprudent and ignorant Pastor, where the People shall have liberty of Separation for the sake of Edification. The ill effects of this have turned upon their own Ministers, and new Government; and the most judicious among them have sadly complained of it. Formerly they petitioned for a painful and preaching Ministry, but this pretence of better Edification gives Denial to their own request; such Discouragements as these happening severely sometimes to the best of Pastors, as well as the worst. And they have no Cure for this, having put a power into the Peoples hands which they cannot recal; for neither King, Parliament, Bishop or Pastor, can tell them what is Edification so well as themselves. And are the Pastors of the Church to be so treated and trifled with, who derive their Offices and Authority from God to command and perswade, to rebuke and exhort, and have the Charge of Souls committed to them, for Fancies, Peevishness and Humour, to be scorn'd and
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discountenanc'd, and have their Ministry rendred uselefs, and the Sheep to govern the Shepherd? But what if our Pastor be idle or remifs in his Duty, or corrupt in his Faith, and teacheth Error instead of found Doctrine, and we have no means of Edification? What must we do? Must we take in Poison for Food, or not be fed at all? To be sure you must not run into a Schismatical Separation: 'tis more tolerable to go to other Congregations of our Communion; that may be irregular, but 'tis not Schismatical: but thanks be to God, we have a Government, which, upon a just and modest Complaint, will quicken the lazy and negligent, correct the Heretical Pastor, and restore to you true Edification.

That this Discourse may prevail upon such who make this Question, I desire to recommend these two following things, which are very reasonable, to their Consideration.

1. That if they fancy any Defects in our Government, they should not hence conclude, that they have not sufficient Edification in the Church to save their Souls. If upon a nice Search and critical Enquiry, they think they have found some little Flaws and Defects, improper Phrases, doubtful Senses, and some small omissions in the Matter of our Prayers and Discipline, yet let them not conclude, that these can weigh in the Ballance against the black Sin of Schism and Separation, and all its sad Consequences, which is excus'd by nothing else but Terms of Communion plainly Sinful. Have not Divine Services been accepted, which were less perfect, and came not up to their rule? As is plain in *Hezekiah's Passover*, which was not to the *Purification of the Sanctuary*, yet the good King's Prayer, *Chorn. 30. 18. 19. 20.* and the necessity of the time,

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prevailed with God *to heal the People**, that is, to repute them clean and well prepar'd, and their Sacrifice and Devotion good. Is there no Reverence to be paid to the Pious Authors of our Service and Reformation, but to tell them, they must divide from them, were they now living? For they cannot Edifie under that Religion and Government for which they dy'd. Is there, or will there ever be any Government in the Church, so well fram'd and built, but some curious Surveyor can spy out some Disproportion or ill Shape, especially if assisted by ill Nature, Emulation, the Spirit of Pride and Contention, which is ever quick-sighted Abroad, and blind at Home? The Difficulty of knowing what is utmost Perfection, and absolute Purity of Administrations, (which, till attain'd, these Men think they are not to rest in any Church) should make them judge candidly, interpret fairly, and comply with every thing, that is not Sinful, to preserve Peace and Love. When Men in the English Church are plainly taught to believe well, to live well, and to die well, and have good and proper Offices to serve these great Purposes, in order to their Salvation, what can they desire more? To be better, or more fav'd, we know not what it means. To leave such a Communion, upon such an Account, proceeds from Peevishness, Uncharitableness, or some ill Principle; and is downright Schism, if ever there was Schism in the World. Bring but an honest, sincere and teachable Mind, and it will find Improvement and Advantage in Offices and Administrations, fuller of Spots and Blemishes far than they can pretend to find in the English Church; but if the Mind be byass'd by a Party, or corrupted by Designs, if it's Palate be vitiated, the best Food is coarse and insipid to it.

2. Let Edification be plac'd in the substantial Things of Religion. Some revolt from our Church

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* 2 Chron. 30. 18, 19, 20.

for things wherein the Pastour is solely concerned, and others for things of Decency and Indifferency; but these do not concern the Case of Edification. That a right Faith, and an honest Conversation, are not taught in our Church, is only a scandal cast upon her, to plead for their unjust Separation. For after she hath plainly and distinctly taught the Articles of Faith, (as was proved before) with the same Spirit and Zeal she commands and presses Justice, Humility, Mercy, and every Vertue that is necessary to a true Christian Life, and both under the Penalty of Eternal Damnation: these, and these alone, do truly Edifie the Souls of Men; as is plain, if we consider, that our Prayers and Sacraments, our Churches, Ceremonies and Discipline, and all other parts in Religion, are in order to, and minister unto Faith their Head, that works by Love: and the nearer these approach unto, and the greater Service they do to this Design, the greater degree they have in Religion, and more value is set upon them. This is that Religion which our first Parent was of in his Paradise and Innocency; *Noah* and his Posterity in their Precepts; and Pious Men in different Countries before the Law of *Moses* thus served God. And the scope and aim of the *Jewish* Law, with its Temple and Utensils, its Figures and Ceremonies, was to Discipline and teach Men thus to be good, with Allowance to the Nature of that People, and the Times they lived in. And the best and most knowing *Pagans* thought such a Religion as this would most please God; who therefore in some measure did accept it, and reward it with greater Discoveries, as is plain in * *Cornelius*, the Queen of *Candace's* Treasurer, and others, who having not the Law, were a Law unto themselves. In such things

* Acts. 8. 27. Acts. 10. 4. Rom. 14. 17.

as these the Kingdom of our Messias was to consist; not in Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Such a Religion as this, edifies in so great a degree, that 'tis the only Condition and Qualification for the upper World; where (though other great parts of Religion shall dië with us) Righteousness, Gratitude, Love of God, and glorified Beings, and such like Vertues, are of an Eternal Nature, shall be Ingredients of our Happiness, and shall live with us for ever. What can be justly required in Religion, to improve Mens Souls, that is not found in this? Is it to recover the Nature of Man now defac'd? Righteousness and Goodness proceeding from Faith, their Root will make us truly Good. Is it to give us a clearer Knowledge and worthy Conceptions of God? Such a practical Religion as this best prepares for greater Knowledge, and in Scripture Sence is knowing of him. Is it Religion to love God? 1 *John* 2. 4. The Love of God consists in Obedience to his Precepts, Submission to his Will, and Resignation to his Providence; otherwise 'tis Flattery and Fondness. Is it the Design of Religion to bless Mankind here, and edifie them in their different Relations? Such a Religion as this in our Church will do all that, and make the World a Paradise once more. This will give us the best Character to judge by, whether we shall be sav'd or no, being the Perfection of all other Marks and Signs of our Assurance of Life and Glory. When we are so edified and religious, we are certain that we are justified and adopted, accepted and treated like the Sons of God; that we are in Christ, and have our wedding Garments on, our proper Qualifications for the State of Heaven. Such an honest Principle as this makes our Prayers to be heard, our Devotions to be regarded, our Hopes to be strengthened. This is the great Intention

of Christianity, the Holy of Holies of our Temple, and all Religion. Such a Religion as this being so strongly enjoyn'd and zealously taught in our Church, no ways disguis'd by a dress of Phrases, or corrupted into soft and luscious Sences, we need not complain for want of the Means of Grace and Edification; we need not cross the Seas, or run into private Corners for it; 'tis nigh us, even at our doors, in the establish'd Government of the Church of *England*. Some use to say, that brown Bread and the Gospel was very good Fare; but now they are grown as nice and delicate about Religion and Edification, as about Sawces and Dresses. Thanks be to God, 'tis a knowing Age, I wish it was as good. The Corruption of it doth not arise for want of Knowledge and Information; if it doth, the Cure is near, let them value that Church and Government that hath all things in it sufficient to Mens Salvation. Let them not think so light of Schism, and speaking Evil of the Rule and Discipline in our Church, so fit and necessary to the Preservation of Christianity; let them not cry up other *Pauls* and *Apollos's*; any other Teachers making Divisions among us, than this Church hath allowed for their Edification; which is so far from Spiritual Edification, that it calls such Men *Carnal*, 1 Cor. 3. 4. For the desire of any other Nourishment, *beside such plain Food*, is *Spiritual Pride and Wantonness*; and they pamper their Fancies, while they starve their Judgments. Let us therefore stick to such a manly Religion, one great part of which is, to preserve Obedience, Peace, and Order; and say of our Church, that teacheth it, as the Disciples of its Author; *Thou art he, and we seek for no other: whither shall we go?*

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thou hast the words of *Eternal Life*. She hath all things in her that are necessary for the perfecting of the *Saints*, for the *Work of the Ministry*, for the edifying of the *Body*; till we all come in the *Unity of the Faith*, and of the *Knowledge of the Son of God*, unto a perfect *Man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of *Christ*, Ephes. 4. 12, 13. That such a Religion as this in our Church is pleasing both to God and Man, we have the Testimony of an Apostle; *He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men*, Rom. 14. 18.

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Profiting by Sermons,
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Of going to Hear where Men
think they can Profit most.

AS there is nothing that all good Men more desire, nothing that they more heartily seek and endeavour, than an happy Reunion of all those with us, who have rent themselves from us (which we should reckon to be one of the highest Blessings that God can bestow upon us,) so there is little hope of seeing those Desires and Endeavours satisfied, while the smallest Scruples seem a sufficient Cause to hinder many People from joyning with us.

But among all the Reasons that I have heard alleged for leaving our Churches, this seems to me to be the weakest and most ungrounded, That our Ministers are unedifying Preachers; for they cannot profit by their Sermons. Which I am informed, is so commonly objected, and some lay such weight upon it, and it carries with it such a shew of Piety

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(it being a very commendable thing to desire to be the better for every Sermon one hears) that it is thought to be worth some-body's Pains, to try to remove this unjust Prejudice, which too many have entertained against the most instructive and useful Sermons that, perhaps, are preached any where in the Christian World.

This may seem too high a Commendation; but it is the Judgment of more indifferent Persons than we are, on either side: of Strangers I mean, who have seen the World; and having learned our Language, and heard and read our Sermons that are commonly preached and printed in this great City, affirm there are not the like to be found in any Church whatsoever. God grant we be not deprived of such singular Helps by our contempt of them; and that our Candlestick be not removed out of its place, because we withdraw ourselves from the Light which it holds forth to us.

Of which we are in very great danger, if not knowing what it is truly to profit by Sermons, we make no progress at all in the State of Christianity; but deceive our own Souls in a vain Opinion of our Acquaintance with God, and our blessed Saviour, and the Mysteries of the Gospel, which have little or no effect upon our Hearts and Lives.

I do not pronounce this to be the Case of those who object to us, that we have an unprofitable Ministry: but I doubt not to demonstrate, that the Sermons which are generally preached by the Ministry in this City (to whose Inhabitants I principally write) are such that they may profit by them, if it be not their own Fault; and then leave them to Judge of themselves as they see cause.

I suppose we are all agreed, or may easily agree, what it is to profit by Sermons: for we agree that the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to our Salvation; and therefore when they are rightly opened, and duly applyed to a Sermon, so that the

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Hearers improve either in Christian Knowledge, or in Faith, or in Well-doing, then they profit by that Sermon. Now if any Man do not improve in these, by the help of the Sermons which he may hear in our Churches, and the Fault lye in the Sermon; it must be either in the Matter of it, or in the Manner: for none, I presume, will be so bold as to affirm, that God's Spirit did not accompany a Sermon, which wants nothing belonging to either of these, the Preacher also being duly qualified. And, thanks be to God, there are none that dare now complain of an *Idle, Scandalous, Insufficient* Ministry about this City: but instead of that, they, that were wont to have those Words in their Mouths, have taken up the complaint of an *Unedifying*. Whereby we have gained this great Point, That they have no colour to pretend the Person who Preaches is un-sanctified, and therefore God doth not bless his Ministry: but the Fault must lye (if there be any) in the Sermon it self; and that in the Matter of which it consists, or in the Manner of its Delivery.

I.

And as for the former of these, I can scarce think that any Dissenter, when he seriously considers, will except against our Sermons upon that account; they being taken out of the Holy Scriptures (which are the Foundation of our Religion) and with such care to find out their true Sense and proper Meaning, that perhaps they were never more clearly opened, and rightly applyed, than they are now a-days in our Churches. I am sure, all that Heavenly Truth which was delivered to our first Parents, when they were about to be expelled out of Paradise; which God repeated in his Promises to *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; which he shadowed and confirmed in the Law of *Moses*; illustrated by the Oracles of the Prophets; and finally fulfilled in the Incarnation, Birth, Life, Death,

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Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Son of God ; and diffused by the Preaching of the Apostles and the Power of the Holy Ghost, all over the World ; is there so fully and distinctly taught, that we may safely say, the whole Counsel of God's Will is at one time or other faithfully declared among us.

And as that is declared compleatly, so little else is meddled withal : Matters of Controversie being as rarely handled in our Pulpits, I believe, as in any place of the World : unless it be those which the present State of Things sometimes makes absolutely necessary, to fortifie the People against Popery, and against Separation : yet even these are not so often treated of, as Matters of general Concernment to all Parties of Christians whatsoever. For the great drift of our Preachers seems to be, to instruct the People in the Truth, and to make them good (particularly to give them right Notions of God, which are the very bottom of all Religion) knowing that Errors and Superstitions will fall of themselves, without a particular Confutation. For they are supported by nothing but Ignorance and naughty Affections ; which will uphold them against all the Arguments whereby they can be assaulted, unless Men's Minds be informed and possessed with such a right Sense of things, as alters their Wills and Affections, and turns them to an unfeigned Love of God and Goodness.

Which seems to me to be the aim and scope of the Sermons which are generally preached by our Ministers : and which is so well performed, that we need not fear to affirm, there is nothing necessary either to make Men truly Knowing in the things of God ; or to work Belief in them ; or to confirm them in the Faith ; or to direct them in their Practice of what they know and believe ; or to excite them to follow those Directions, and to live according to the Laws of the Gospel ; or to satisfie material
Scruples

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Scruples; to resolves Doubts and Cases of Conscience; to comfort disconsolate Penitents, and awaken drowsie Sinners, or any thing of like Nature: but may be met withal in our Churches, so fully, solidly, and judiciously handled, that Men need go no whither else for Edification; if that be the thing they truly desire, and sincerely seek and endeavour.

For what Truth can they learn any where else, which is not to be learnt, if they will attend upon God's Service there, in our Churches? What Motives to believe, or what Arguments to convince Men of their Duty, which are not there represented, and pressed? What Vice is there, which doth not there receive just Correction? What Vertue that is not there most strongly recommended? Which of the Promises are not there applied to the Hearts of the Faithful? and where can Men have better Means of knowing the Terror of the Lord, as the Apostle speaks, against all the Impenitent and Disobedient? And if Men cannot profit where such things as these are constantly managed, to as much advantage, as the skill of the Preacher will enable him, I am sure the fault must lie some where else, than in the Matter of the Sermons.

II.

Yes, will some say, we allow the Matter of them to be good enough: but the Manner of them is such, that we cannot reap the like benefit by them, that we do by other Mens preaching, who cannot conform to the Church of *England*. Which if it be a just Exception, the fault must lie either in the *Composition* of them; or in their Delivery after they are composed.

I. Now if the *Composition* of them be faulty, it is because their Method is not clear and perspicuous; or the *Language* not plain enough to convey the Sense of them to the Mind of the Hearers. Neither of which

which, I am confident can be truly charged upon them. For never did Men more endeavour at orderly Discourse, and aim at plain, unaffected Speech, then they do now in the Church of *England*: where good Sense, in the most easie and familiar Words, is now look'd upon as the principal Commendation of Sermons.

Some indeed, I have heard, find fault with our Sermons for not keeping the old method (as they call it) of *Doctrine, Reason, and Use*: which is altogether unjust as well as frivolous. For there is no Man that baulks that method when it is Natural; but rather chuses it because it hath been Common, and is Easie and Useful. As for example, if any Man among us, were to preach upon this Text, *Corinth. 13. 13. And now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity; these three, but the greatest of these is Charity*; He would, without doubt, not only observe among other Doctrines, *the preheminance of Charity*; but also give the best Reasons he could think of, why it ought to be the highest in our Esteem, and our Affections too; because it is the very End of Faith and Hope; and because it makes us like unto God, which Faith and Hope do not. And after such like things, he would likewise make that Use of this Doctrine, which the Apostle himself doth immediately in the very next Words (*Verse 1. Chapter 14.*) pressing every one to *follow after* the love of God, and of their Neighbour: to follow it earnestly and vigorously, and never cease their pursuit till they feel their Hearts possessed with it: not contenting themselves meerly with believing, but being so affected with it, that they attain the end of their Faith, which ought to work *by Love*. Nay, he would wish them to examine and prove their Faith by this, whether it be likely to save them or no. For if it leave them short of this Charity, it will leave them short of Heaven: for it is Charity alone that hath any place there. And
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who would forbear most *particular entreaties* here, to be very serious in this search: there being so much pretence to *Faith* in the World, and so little *Charity* to be found there. To one sort of *Faith* especially, which is the apprehension of *Christ's Merits*, an Application of them to themselves, which every Body makes bold withal, whilst very few have any thing of that *Charity* which *St. Paul* describes in the Chapter before named, of *that long suffering and kind Charity*; which envieth not, which vaunteth not it self (or is not rash) is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil; (but takes things in the best Sense, and puts the fairest Construction upon them;) in one word, makes a Man inoffensive not only towards God, but towards Men of all sorts, high and low, rich and poor; that is, to the whole Church of God.

The like I might say, of all other Subjects of the same Nature, which lead him that handles them into this Method. But sometime the Matter to be treated of is such, that there is no other reason to be given of it, but only the divine Revelation, upon whose Testimony we receive it; as we do, that *Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, begotten of his Father before all Worlds*. The Uses of which I never heard any Preacher amongst us fail to make, both for the begetting Reverence towards him, Faith in him, and Obedience unto him.

But what need is there of so many Words about this Method of Sermons, when the ancient Doctors of Religion, it is manifest, did not mind it, nor any other? But spake to the Business before them, without observing any constant Rule at all in their Discourses, and then it is apparent People profited by Sermons much more than they do now, when they are most artificially contrived. And it would be an inexcusable Sin in those that should leave our Church, did the Ministers of it only open the Sense of the *Epistle* or the *Gospel* for the day (or any other Portion of

of Holy Scripture, as St. *Chrysostom* was wont to do) without making particular Observations, or concluding all with distinct Uses (as the manner now is) but only with a general Application, pressing what they thought most material, or what the Necessities of the People most required.

By which way of Preaching if Men can receive no profit, they must lay the Blame somewhere else, than upon the *Composition* of the Sermon, or the *Manner of its delivery* either, which is the next thing to be considered.

2. Now here two things are found fault withal : *First*, That our Preachers are not *vehement* enough in the delivery of their Sermons : *Secondly*, That they read them.

For the former of these, it is not true : Where the Matter in hand is of great Concernment, and requires more than ordinary Earnestness. Which ought in reason to be served for some certain Occasions, and not be spent upon all things alike, for then it loses its Effect at that time, when it would be most seasonably and usefully employed.

But there is a great mistake in that which Men call *Vehemence*, which oft-times consists only in the strength of the Voice, which neither all your Preachers, nor all ours, are endowed withal. And if they were, would be but Noise, without good Sense, which will move attentive Minds as much as a loud sound affects Mens Ears.

Add to this, that there is a natural Heat also in some Mens Tempers, which makes them speak vehemently ; with such a warmth, as hath the appearance of much Zeal ; when they are nothing near so deeply affected with what they say, as some Men of more sedate and cool Tempers are, whose Judgment operates more strongly than their Passions. And these Men surely may be very serviceable for illumination of the Mind, with such force of Argument as will

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certainly move the Affections vehemently by the help of serious Consideration; without which if any Affections be raised, they are little worth, and will not last, but vanish as soon as that blast is over which stirred them up.

And this Difference of Temper is observable in your Men, as well as in ours; and therefore this can be no hindrance to Edification among us, no more than among you.

As for *reading of Sermons*, it is not universally used; but there are those among us whom God hath blessed with such Strength of Memory, or Readiness of Conception, that they need not the help of any Notes at all in the Pulpit. And others do not tie themselves to them, so as never to look off the Book, but only assist their Memory by them sometimes; whereby the Auditory is assured that they hear nothing but what hath been beforehand considered and digested: And the Preacher himself also is secured, that he shall not forget any thing of Moment which he hath prepared, and that no Expression slip from him on a sudden, which may prove indecent or imprudent. As for those whose Weakness of Memory, or their great Modesty and Fear of being out (as we speak) compels them to keep their Eye constantly upon their Notes; as they and others have the forenamed Advantages by it, so no Man can be in the least prejudiced by it, who will but turn his Eyes another way, and not look upon the Preacher. Then the Sermon will sound as well as if it were all pronounced without-book: Or if this make it unprofitable, by the same reason the Holy Scriptures become unprofitable, when they are read out of the Bible; and they also must be got without-book, to make them edifying. Nay, this Exception will lye also against some of your own Preachers of great Note, who read every word. I am sure they did so heretofore, and this was then thought no hindrance to your profiting by them: Or, if it were, you heard them when you could not profit by them, so

as you could by those that did not read. And so you may do now by our Preachers of this kind, nay, so you ought to do; when you have nothing to say against them, but what they are equally chargeable withal, whom you highly commend.

III.

But after all, I have some reason to fear, that when Men complain they cannot profit by our Sermons, they mean nothing by profiting, but that their Affections are not mov'd in the hearing of them, so as they are by the Sermons of Nonconformists. Unto which I have many things to say, if this Paper would contain them, but it will be sufficient to touch only upon these three.

1. That Men have several Talents, both among you and among us, which are all very profitable; some for informing the Judgment, others for moving the Affections, and others (which is most desirable) for both: You are not able to say, that all yours move you so as some do; and yet you make such account of all, that it hath ever been look'd upon as a very disorderly thing among your selves (and worse than that I shall prove by and by) for People to run from their own Minister to hear some other (though of the same way) meerly to have the Affections more moved. Because,

2. This alone is so far from profiting by Sermons, that it is very great unprofitableness to be moved by a Sermon, and do nothing thereupon, but only commend it: That is, to be tickled and pleased a while, but not altered nor changed a whit: Or to be warmed perhaps a little for the present, and then left as cold as a Stone, without any Spiritual Life, or endeavour to be the better.

3. But the great thing of all is this, That Affections raised meerly by the earnestness of the Preach-

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er, at present in the hearing of a Sermon (and it is well if the Affections which some People speak of, be not Motions which they feel meerly from the tone of the Voice, as from a taking Phrase, a Similitude, or some such trifle) are nothing comparable to those which we raise by God's Blessing upon our own serious Consideration, when we reflect upon what we have heard, which sort of most excellent Affections, the Sermons that are preached in our Churches cannot fail to produce, if you please but to attend to the matter of them, and press them upon your Hearts: Nay your Judgments being well inform'd, it would not be hard for you (if you would but take a little pains with your selves) to excite such Affections unto that which you know to be your Duty as would abide and remain; when the others that were excited in the hearing of a Sermon, are gone, and quite vanished, and can never be recalled, but by your own serious Meditation upon those Divine Truths, which entred into your Mind, and would have touched, nay, pierced your Hearts, if you would have brought them thither, and held them close to your Consciences.

Which ought to be every Christian's care more than I doubt it is, in order to their profiting by Sermons; and that they *may not be barren and unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

IV.

And now it is time for all those who are concern'd in what hath been said, to apply it to the present Case, and going down into themselves, to enquire where the Fault must necessarily lye, if the Sermons preached by our Ministers have proved unprofitable to them; which supposeth, that they who object this against coming to Church, have come heretofore, at least to the Sermon; but went away and came no more, because they reaped no Benefit thereby

thereby. Else how can they pretend that our Sermons are unprofitable if they never heard them? Now, I have demonstrated, that the Blame cannot be justly cast upon the Sermons, which in themselves are every way fitted to do Men good; and therefore we must seek for the cause of this Unprofitableness somewhere else; and where are we so likely to find it as in those that heard the Sermons? Whom I beseech, in the Fear of God, by whose Word we must one day be all Judged, to consider with themselves impartially, and to ask their Consciences such *Questions* as these.

1. *Quest.* Had you not some Prejudice in your mind against the Person of the Minister whom you came to hear, either upon the score of his Conformity, or of his Strictness in it, or some other account? If you had, and carried it along with you, there is great reason to think this made his Pains unprofitable to you, because you could not hear him with that Indifference which you would have heard another Man withal. But looking upon him perhaps as a *Time-Server*, (as the Language of some hath been) a *Formalist*, or one who you presumed before-hand had little or nothing of the Spirit in him, you minded not so much what was said, as who said it; and disliked those things which out of another Mouth you would have accepted: For if such Prejudices as these be not laid aside, they bar the Heart so strongly against the most excellent Instructions, that though an Angel from Heaven should deliver to us the most Important Truths, yet, we taking him for a *Minister* of Satan, it would stop our Ears against him, and make his message ineffectual.

2. *Quest.* Or, might not this be the reason of your reaping no Benefit, that you came to Church but once or twice, and concluded too hastily there was

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no Good to be got there; being willing also perhaps to have this Excuse for absenting your self wholly from it: Whereas if you had constantly attended our *Ministry*, you might have found your selves so much improved thereby, as never to have thought of leaving the Church upon this account, that you could not profit in it. Make a Tryal now (for it is not too late, I hope, if you can shake off all Prejudices) and for some time continue diligent Auditors of the Minister of your Parish; and that which at first may seem to you dull, or hard, or obscure, will, after you are used to it, be clear, easie, and awakening: When you are acquainted, that is, with his Method, his Stile, his way of Reasoning and Discourse, as well as accustomed to his Voice, which you cannot be in an instant, or at the first hearing: For the Scriptures themselves are obscure and difficult to the best of us, in abundance of Places, till by Conversation with them we grow acquainted with their Phrase, manner of Speaking, Arguing and Connexion. And if God's Word had been generally used, as some among us have treated his Ministers (rejecting them, I mean, because they did not presently apprehend them) it had been thrown out of all Mens hands long ago, as an unprofitable piece.

3. *Quest.* I desire such further, to examine seriously, and recollect themselves, Whether the thing that made them first forsake our Ministry as unprofitable, was not, That when they came to Church the Preacher happened to treat on some Subject cross to their Opinion? Which hasty Persons (who consider not what different Apprehensions Men may have in many matters, and yet agree well enough together) cannot brook; but presently sling away from those that contradict them, as if they contradicted God himself. Whereas, if they would have had Patience, they might have profited even by such

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such Discourses, either by being convinced of their Error, or more confirm'd in that which they took for Truth, being able to answer the Arguments brought against it.

4. *Quest.* But (that which is worse than this) the Minister was perhaps upon some distastful Subject when you chanced to go to Church, and happen'd to treat of such Matters as you love not to hear of, though more necessary, it may be, than many others, for this very Reason, that because of their Ungratefulness they are seldom handled. Will you not be angry nor lay aside this Paper and read no further, if I give an Instance or two? Which I mentioned for no other Reason, but because I know some have taken offence (as they call it) at such Doctrines, and ought if it be possible, to be better taught. Was he not preaching, I mean, about *Schism*, or *Disobedience to Governours*? It is certain *there are* such Sins, which are very heinous and dangerous every way, and therefore no faithful Servant of Jesus Christ can, with a good Conscience, baulk the treating of them some time or other. And suppose he that treated of them when you was at Church extended the Duties of *Unity* and *Obedience* further than you desire, might not you, for all that, have profited very much by what was said upon those Subjects?

I believe sober Men among you have heard some of your own Ministers speak harder Words of Conformity and Conformists than you would have had them, and yet you did not for that reason leave them, but still fancied you could profit by them, even by what they said on that Subject of Conformity. And therefore you would do well to search and try what account you can give of taking such Distaste at the established Ministry, as to forsake it upon their pressing some things, which are most certainly Christian Duties with greater strictness than agreed with your present Inclinations.

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And I the rather beseech you to consider such things as these, because it is a common thing to hear Men and Women of your way to complain of their *Unprofitableness under Ordinances*, of the *Deadness of their Heart in Duty*, and their *Barrenness under the most powerful means of Grace*; which arises perhaps in those Minds that are well inclined meerly from a natural Dulness or Indisposition, which makes them unable to attend, or to remember and keep in Mind, as they desire, what they have heard; and therefore moral Indispositions (such as Prejudice, Passion, Disaffection to the way of Worship, or to any Christian Doctrine) will much more make Men unapt to receive any Impressions from what is said to them, though in it self never so good, and fitted powerfully to affect the Heart, were it but entertained with an honest Mind.

So that if you complain of Deadness and Unprofitableness under the *Ministry of our Church*, it is no more than a great many of you do of the like Barrenness under your own; but proceeding, it is to be feared, from a worse Cause; of which in reason you should suspect your selves to be guilty, rather than conclude so suddenly as you do, our *Ministry* to be unedifying.

V.

The very same may be said to those who fancy, that though they can profit something by our Ministry, yet they can profit more by others. They ought in Conscience to examine whence this Conceit ariseth; whether it do not proceed from Prejudice, from Disaffection, from Disgust at some Doctrine which they love not should be touched, from their seldom Attendance upon the establish'd Ministry, from their careless hearing when they were there, or from the hasty Sentence they pronounced against it before a sufficient Tryal. And withal, they should consider what they mean by profiting; whether really

ly and truly they are not more earnestly pressed in our Congregations to be thorowly good and virtuous, to take a strict care to please God in Thought, Word, and Deed, than they are in those where they imagine they profit more, because they are entertained there, perchance, with more pleasing Subjects than this of their whole Christian Duty.

I only suggest this as a thing to be most deeply pondered, and do not accuse you to be guilty of such Falseness to your own Souls: But this I must say, That if you do not grow more holy, harmless, and unreprieveable in your common Conversation, if your Passions be not better governed, if your Tongues be not more strictly bridled, if you grow not more Humble, less Conceited of your selves, less confident of your own Understandings, more fearful to offend God by censuring, rash Judging, disrespectful Behaviour to your *Betters* and *Superiors*, and such like things, you do but deceive your selves with an Opinion of profiting more by the Nonconforming Ministry than by ours. Upon which if you would attend with a mind to improve in these great things, I am well assured your profiting might appear to all Men as well as to your selves; who might be convinced in a little time, there is no need to go any whither else for such Edification. And if you go for any other, there will be no end of seeking still for better Entertainment of your Fancies and Itching Ears, which will desire to be gratified with infinite variety.

The mischief of which they of your own way have felt and complained of as much as we, and the better any of them have been, the more careful have they appeared in giving Cautions against this wanton Humour, though pretending never so much to Religion, and to growth in Grace, or Soul-saving Knowledge. In the days of your Forefathers, I am sure, they who could not in all things conform to the

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Church of *England*, look'd upon this as a dangerous Principle, that *men must go where they can profit most*. And because it is likely, that the Opinion of a grave and serious Person, highly esteemed by all your Party formerly, may prevail with you more than any of ours, give me leave to mind you what Mr. *Hilderſham* hath resolved in ſeveral Caſes like to ours, particularly about this, of *Mens leaving their own Paſtors to hear others*.

VI.

1. And *fiſt*, he resolves this, That *it is the Ordinance of God every Paſtor ſhould have his own Flock to attend, and every one of God's People ſhould have a Paſtor of his own to depend upon*. From whence he concludes, that none of thoſe People may ordinarily and uſually leave that Paſtor, becauſe then he doth not depend upon his Miniſtry, which he proves every one of them is bound to do.

2. And that you may not imagine he means any other Paſtor than ſuch as ours, his *ſecond* Reſolution is this, that *they who dwell next together ſhould be of the ſame Congregation*; whence the name of *Parochia* and *Pariſh* fiſt came.

3. Now *thirdly*, if it happen that he who is the ſettled Paſtor of the place where you dwell is a Man whoſe Gifts are far inferiour to ſome others; his Reſolution in this Caſe is, That (he being a Man *whoſe Gift is approved by God's Church, and who is conſcionable in his place, and of an unblamable Life*) you ought not to leave him at any time, with contempt of his Miniſtry. And then you condemn his Miniſtry, when you ſpeak or think thus in your Heart. *Alas! he is no Body; a good honeſt Man, but he hath no Gifts; I cannot profit by him*. (Mind I beſeech you theſe words, which are none of mine, but Mr. *Hilderſham's*, and I doubt too common Language now among you) and mark the Reaſons he gives (which I ſhall contract)

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contract) why you may not do this. First, *A man may be a true Minister tho' his Gifts be far inferiour to many others : and consequently, secondly, You are bound to love him, and reverence him, and thank God for him : and thirdly, Doubtless you may profit by him, if the fault be not in your selves.* The best Christian that is may profit by the meanest of Christs Servants. And I am perswaded, saith he, *There is never a Minister that is of the most excellent Gifts, (if he have a Godly heart) but he can truly say he never heard any faithful Minister in his Life that was so mean, but he could discern some Gift in him that was wanting in himself, and could receive some profit by him.*

Which is a thing worthy your Consideration now ; for there is none of your Ministers dare say, that they cannot profit by the Sermons that are commonly preached in our Churches ; and therefore so may you, if you please to be impartial, how meanly soever you may think of any of our Ministers ; especially if you observe this *fourth* thing, which the same Mr. *Hilderham* judiciously adds, That,

4. *The Fruit and Profit which is to be received from the Ministry, depends not only nor chiefly upon the Gifts of the Man that preaches, but upon the Blessing that God is pleased to give unto his own Ordinance, To which he applies those words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 3. 5, 6, 7, 8. Who is Paul ? and who is Apollo ? but Ministers by whom ye belived, even as the Lord gave to every Man. I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the Increase. So then, neither is he that planted anything, nor he that watereth, but God giveth the Increase, &c.* And God doth oft give a greater Blessing to weak than to stronger means : and therefore consider, saith he, the fault may be rather in thy self than in the Preacher, that thou canst not profit. And indeed, how shouldst thou profit by his Ministry, if thou come with Prejudice, without any Reverence or Delight unto it, and dost scarce acknowledge God's Ordinance in it,

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it, nor ever seek to God for his Blessing upon it ; but look wholly at the Man who Preaches ?

To conclude this, he observes the great want of Judgment that appears in this sort of Christians, in the choice they make of their Teachers, and the applause they give unto them ; which shews how necessary it is they should be confined commonly to their own. For as some admire and follow another rather than their own Pastour, because he can make more Ostentation of Eloquence, Reading, Learning, and such like humane Gifts than their own Pastour doth, (upon which account the *Corinthians* preferred fundry Teachers before St. *Paul* himself) so there are those who leave their own Pastour and go to others, *only for variety sake*. Though their own have never such excellent Gifts, yet can they not like any one Man long ; but having itching Ears, must have an heap of Teachers. And some also prefer others before their own Pastour, *only because they shew more Zeal* (mark this) *in their Voice and Gesture, and Phrase of Speech, and manner of Delivery ; though happily the Doctrine it self be nothing so wholesome, or powerful, or fit to edifie their Consciences, as the Doctrine of their own Pastour is*. And though these be the best of the three Sorts now mentioned, and pretend much Love and Zeal, yet we may wish them more Knowledge and Judgment.

I omit other things upon this Subject, which you may find in his 58th Lecture upon the 4th of St. *John*, Where he admits indeed that a Man may some time go from his own Parish Church to hear another, whose Gifts he more admires : But then (like a judicious Divine) adds this notable Observation, to correct and regulate this Liberty, that it may not prove an evil humour ; viz. *He only makes right use of the benefit of hearing such as have more excellent Gifts than his*

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own Pastour, as learns thereby to like his own Pastour the better, and to profit more by him.

Mark it, I most earnestly intreat you, together with his Illustration of it by this Example; *The excellent Gifts God hath bestowed on others, in this Case may be fitly resembled unto Physick; which they use well, whose appetite is thereby amended; and are made able to relish and like their ordinary food the better.* If after Men have heard one of excellent Gifts, they begin to distaste the Ministry of their ordinary Pastours, and can like of none, Profit by none, unless they have rare Gifts; they become at length like to those, who by *accustoming themselves to drink hot and strong waters* bring their Stomachs to that pass, that they can find no Relish or Virtue in any Drink or Water, be it never so hot or strong. Believe it; they receive no true profit from the most admired Preacher, who learn not by hearing him, to profit by any one that delivers to them the wholesome Words of our Lord *Jesus*, and the Doctrine that is according unto Godliness; though in the plainest manner imaginable, both for Method and Language.

This I have chosen to write in his Words, because, there are some, I fear, that would scarce endure such Doctrine from us: which may, at least, be more reverently received, and duly considered (proceeding from a Person of such note heretofore among Nonconformists) and beget so much Sobriety in you all, as to make you think *what manner of Spirit you are now of?* How you come to differ so much from the best of your own way in former days? This is worth your serious study, that you may not offend, as many hearers do, *in a partial and factious estimation they have the Ministers of the Gospel in.*

They are his words again in another place. *Lecture LXVI.* Where he observes this partiality arises from *two* Grounds. First *the respect they have to difference of Judgment* that is among us, in smaller
mat-

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matters, which makes them affect such only as are of their own mind in every thing; with the dislike of all others that are of a contrary Perswasion. And And secondly, *from the respect they have to the difference of Gifts which is among Preachers* (of which I spake before) which moves them to admire some, whom they judge to be of excellent Gifts (though alas, their judgment is very small) but to despise and condemn all others. And he hath these there *two* remarkable Reflections upon this Humour, which I beg of you to observe and remember.

First, That *this factious disposition of the hearers of God's word, hath in all ages been the cause of much confusion in the Church of God, and greatly hindred the fruit of the Gospel of Christ.*

Note here; This way which you are in is not the means of profiting in Religion, but of hindring the growth and increase of it.

The second is, That *whereas they in whom this humour reigneth are wont to glory as if they had more judgment, and could discern better of Gifts than other men* (saying, alas! poor People who esteem so highly of such a Man's Gifts; If they had any judgment or understanding, they would count him no body) *The Apostle tells us, it is quite contrary, and that this argues rather they have very little judgment or grace in them: yea, this makes them incapable of profiting by the Word,* 1 Cor. 3. 1.

O That there were an heart in you, to ponder such profitable Instructions as these! which were said on purpose to check that evil Disposition which began then to appear among People inclinable to Non-Conformity; and is since grown the prevailing humour; insomuch, that some can settle no where, but ramble from one Preacher to another, as their uncertain Fancy guides them, without becoming one whit the better for any.

Yes,

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Yes, will some say; We might be perswaded to come and hear your Preachers, and hear them constantly, but we ought not to be compelled to it; that's a thing you can never justifie. To which so much have been answered by others, that I shall only tell you what that good Man before-named saith to it, in one of those Lectures which was preached in *Parliament* time, *May 8. 1610.* where he takes occasion to stir up the People to pray earnestly for the States of the Realm then assembled; that their principal care might be, to take order about two things; *first*, That an able and conscionable Ministry may be placed every where; and *secondly*, that *ALL* People may be compelled to hear. *For it is certain* (saith he upon the second head) *that where there is a good Ministry established, the Magistrate may and ought to compel ALL Subjects to come and hear; notwithstanding all pretence of their Consciences to the contrary.*

VII.

To sum up all then that hath been said in this Business. Be pleased to consider, *What makes a Sermon profitable*; and, *What must be done by the People to profit by the Sermon.*

A Sermon is then profitable when it informs the Mind and Judgment aright in Divine Truth; when it instructs you in any part of the Christian Duty; when it tends to strengthen or awaken your Faith, that you may more stedfastly adhere, and earnestly apply yourselves to what you know and believe certainly to be God's Mind and Will; when it works upon the Will and the Affections to submit intirely to God's Will, that you may bring forth the Fruit of a Holy Life; when it corrects any of your Errors; stirs up your Sloth; encourages you to Diligence, Chearfulness, and Perseverence, and such like things.

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But the best contrived Sermon in the World for all these Ends, though it were indited by the Spirit of God it self; would have no efficacy at all in it, if they that heard it did not attend to it; and attend without Prejudice, without Passion, without Partiality, without rash and hasty Judgment, without Pride and Conceit of themselves, and their own Knowledge and Righteousness: that is, unless they consider and weigh what is delivered, though contrary to their present Sense, unless they will impartially give every thing that is offered to their Mind a due regard; and allot some time for its further Consideration, when it is not in their liking, &c. For want of which, multitudes did not profit by our Saviours Sermons, but were rather more exasperated by them; and at last finally hardned against him and against the Holy Ghost, when it came down from Heaven to convince them.

I doubt not they were ready enough then to lay the blame upon his Sermons, which pressed them to many things, unto which they had no mind; being against their Interest, or against some Opinion or Affection to which they were deeply ingaged; so that they did not Profit by them. But for all this, you believe the fault was wholly in themselves, who ought to have come better prepared; with honest and good Hearts to hear his Word. And therefore have reason to consider in your present Case, that since the most profitable Sermons that ever were made, can do no good, unless Men be disposed to Profit by them: whether the unprofitableness you complain of under our Ministry, do not arise rather for want of what you ought to do to make the most excellent Sermon profitable, than from any defect in the Ministry.

Judge now, I say, upon the whole: if you cannot profit by the publick Ministry; Where is it most reasonable to think the Cause of this Unprofitableness lies?

lies? Whether to suspect the Cause may lie in your selves; or to impute it to their Sermons, and conclude them to be unedifying. Pronounce, I beseech you, righteous Judgment after you have well weigh'd the Matter; and give such things as I have here laid before you, a just and deliberate Consideration: so as hereafter to resolve to lay aside all Prejudice, and to be perfectly free to hear with Patience and Candor, what can be said by any Body; though against your present Perswasion. Let not your Passions rise at it; or if they do, immediately suppress them, and require them not to meddle in this Matter: but to submit unto what shall appear to be reason, after you have weighed the Matter impartially.

If you cannot do this, you ought to think that you have not profited much, by all the Sermons you have heard: and consequently suspect, you are in a wrong way of growing wiser and better. And after you have brought your self to much Liberty, I doubt not you will find that you are in a wrong way; and therefore resolve to alter it, and come into the way of the Church. Where if you do not meet presently with such Advantages for your Spiritual growth, as you are told you may receive, you have reason to conclude, as the forenamed Mr. *Hilderham* doth to those, that said they could not find such Lights, such Power, such Comfort in the Word, as was spoken of. *First, either you have not sought it aright, not with earnestness, or not with a good Heart: or Secondly, if you have and do not find it at first; yet you shall hereafter, if you seek it here with an honest heart.*

VIII.

And the preaching of God's Holy Word, would be of greater Efficacy upon your Hearts; if when you come to partake of it, you would remember and observe some Rules (delivered by the same Author in another place, Lecture XXVI.) about the publick

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publick Worship of God, which now, alas, are generally neglected; and therefore had need to be pressed, for the disposing all Men's Hearts to profit by their Attendance on it.

1. One is, that *at your coming into the Congregation, and during the whole time of your abode there, you would behave your selves reverently.* For we may not come into the place of God's Worship, as we would into a dancing School, or Play-House, laughing or toying, &c. neither may we go out of it, as we would out of such a one; but in our very coming in, and going out, and whole outward Carriage there, we ought to give some Signification of the Reverence that we bear to this Place; and that we do indeed account it the House of God.

Which serious Temper of Mind, and awful Sense of Gods Presence, possessing the Mind, would, no doubt, be an excellent Preparation to receive Benefit by the whole Service of God, as well as by the Sermon. For which end,

2. Another Rule is, *That we must all come to the beginning of God's publick Worship, and tarry till all be done.* Yea, it is the Duty of God's People, saith he, *to be in God's House before the beginning: for it becomes them to wait for the Minister of God, and not to let him wait for them.* The Reasons he gives for this are two. First, there is nothing done in our Assemblies, but all may receive Profit by it. For example, by the Confession of Sins (and Absolution, I may add) and all other Prayers used in the Congregation, a Man may receive more profit and comfort, than by any other. Which is the reason why the Apostles (even after Christ's Assentation, when the Typical Honour of the Temple was abolished, &c.) were so delighted to go to the Temple to pray, at the times of Publick Prayer, *1 Acts 3. &c.*

And so he goes on to shew how by *hearing the Word read*, all may profit: and by *hearing it preached*, even
by

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by the meanest Minister of Christ, if the fault be not in themselves. How the *singing of Psalms* also furthers the fruit of the Word in the Hearts of Believers; and much more Benefit may the Faithful receive by the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. Nay, by being present at the *Administration of Baptism*, all may receive profit; being put in mind thereby of the Covenant of God made with them in Baptism, &c. Lastly, by the *Blessing pronounced by God's Minister* all may receive good; and therefore none ought to absent himself from any part of the Publick Service of God.

For which his *second Reason* is very remarkable, That though we could receive no profit by the Exercises used in our Assemblies, yet we must be present at them all, to do our homage unto God, and shew the reverent Respect we have to his Ordinances. For there is nothing done in God's publick Worship among us (observe this) but it is done by the Instruction and Ordinance and Commandment of the Lord. As he shews particularly, that it is his Ordinance there should be all sorts and kinds of Prayers used; yea, this is the chief Duty to be performed in our Assemblies, 1 Kings 11. 1, 2. that in our Publick Assemblies the word of God should be read as well as preached, the Holy Communion administred, &c. that is, all things should be done as they are now in our Common-Prayer, to which it is plain he hath Respect. And this he repeats again, *Lecture XXVIII.*

If thou wast sure thou couldst not profit, yet must thou come to do thy Homage to God, and to shew thy reverence to his Ordinance.

3. Another of his general Rules is, That when we are present we ought to joyn with the Congregation in all the parts of God's Worship, and do as the Congregation doth. For it makes much for the Comeliness and Reverence of God's Worship, that all things be done in good Order, without Confusion. And it is a principal Part of this good Order that should be

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in the Congregation; when they they all come together, and go together, pray together, sing together, kneel together: In a word, when every part of God's Worship is to be performed by the Congregation, as if the whole Congregation were but one Man.

And in several Places he reproves with a deal of Zeal, Mens great Carelesness in this; particularly their neglect of Kneeling in the Prayers: Having observed that Men who will kneel at their own Private Prayers, *can never be seen to kneel at the Common and Publick Prayer.*

His last general Rule is, That we ought to teach our Children and Servants to shew Reverence to the Sanctuary and publick Worship of God. For God cannot endure Profaneness and Contempt of Religion, no not in Children. And it stands us all upon to use the utmost Authority we have to maintain the Reverence of God's Sanctuary: for the open Contempt done by any, may bring God's Curse on us all. And certainly, saith he, among other Causes of the Plague, and other Judgments of God upon the Land, this is not the least that God's publick Worship is performed among us with so little Reverence and Devotion as it is.

I am tempted to transcribe a great deal more of these Lectures; because by them you may see that if I had moved all that had been said about our Sermons, I might (according to the Judgment of this devout and learned Man) have maintain'd that there wants not sufficient Means of Profiting in our Congregations, if there were none: As long as the Word of God is there read, by which (together with the other holy Duties) all may receive the greatest Profit and Comfort, if they please. For it is of far greater Excellence, Authority and Certainty, than the Sermons of any Preacher in the World. First, Because it comes more immediately from God: And though it be translated by Men, yet is there in it far less mixture of humane Ignorance and Infirmity than

than in Sermons. While the Word is *read*, we are sure we hear God speaking to us, and that it is the Truth that we hear, but not always so, when Men *preach*; for the best Man is subject to Error, which, by the way, shews the great Ignorance and Prophane-ness of this Age, wherein Men make nothing of the reading of God's Word, but take the liberty to Discourse, and that all the time while the first and second Lessons are read to them.

And, *secondly*, The Word that is read is the Foundation of all Sermons, and the very Touch-stone whereby they are to be tryed. To that which we hear read, simple and absolute Obedience is due, without any question made of the Truth and Certainty of it: But so it is not to that which we hear preached, farther than we find it agreeable to the written Word; for they of *Berea* were commended for examining by this, even that which the Apostles themselves did preach.

IX.

But I say no more of this; and shall only crave leave with some Earnestness, to desire *two* things of every one who says he cannot profit by our Sermons.

1. The *First* is, that he would examine himself strictly upon this Question; whether he thinks he could profit by such a Sermon as this, did he hear it preach'd by one of your Ministers? Search to the very bottom of your Hearts, and be not satisfied till you feel how they stand affected, and how they would receive a Discourse upon these Subjects, should you come occasionally (as you now speak) into one of our Churches, and there find the Preacher pressing these things upon the Peoples Consciences? Especially if you heard him add to these Rules, that *for the Reverence of God's publick Worship, care should be taken that the place where the Congregation assembleth, may be decent and comely*. And he should call this place a *Temple*, and affirm, that God's Publick Worship is no where so well performed as in this Temple: And that it is a foul Sin and Contempt

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done to God's Worship, that Parishoners either will not be at the Charge to maintain such as may keep the Church decently, or are altogether careless to see it done : And that the true Cause why now a-days Men will be at no cost with God's House, is, because they have no delight in it ; and that this is a piece of Irreligiousness, which is a just Cause of Grief to every Godly Man, &c. Reflect, I say, upon your selves, and resolve what you really think you would judge of such a Sermon : How would it be accepted by you ?

Would be apt to look upon it as altogether unprofitable ; or, at least, as needless Discourse, which might as well, nay, better be spared than preached to the People.

If this be your Mind, then consider with your selves, why such things out of one Man's Mouth should relish well enough, or go down without disgust, which coming out of anothers you presently dislike ? Is it not manifest, that you are Partial and Disaffected, and that this is the reason you cannot profit by our Sermons ? Or if you could not like such Discourses, either from Non-conformists, or from our Ministers, then consider, whether you have not reason to think you are very much mistaken in this Business of *profitable Sermons* ; when you imagine such Discourses as these to be unprofitable and superfluous, which, in the Judgment of sober Men of all sides, are not only very useful, but so necessary to be taught the People, that for want of a Sense of such things, they are in danger to lose their Religion ? For as that good Man said long ago (and I doubt we are much improved in such Impiety since that time) *as Superstition made the Papists too careful, and too bountiful ; so Prophaneness and Atheism hath made us too void of all care, in beautifying the House of God,*

2. But if you think that you should count such a Sermon profitable, then I desire you, *secondly*, to

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examine your selves, and consider, whether you have learnt so much out of the Holy Scriptures, as to observe all the foregoing Rules duly and carefully? Or so much as to make them your Study, and to think how to bring your Heart into conformity with them? Do you, for instance, Reverence God's Sanctuary? And when you come into it, and while you are there, give open Significations of it? Do you come at the beginning of Divine Service, or only to some part of it, at the latter end, or the Sermon only? Do you stand up, and do you kneel when the rest of the Congregation doth? &c.

If you cannot say that you are so well acquainted with these, and the rest of the foregoing Rules, as to endeavour to live by them; then in Reason you ought to conclude, that the fault is somewhere else, and not in our Sermons, if you cannot profit by them; for you do not profit by the Holy Scriptures themselves.

Where these things are so plainly taught, that a Man ought to think very meanly of himself, and to look upon himself as a poor Proficient in Religion; who is not advanced thus far in his regard to the Duties and the Solemnities of God's Worship and Service.

And, if being admonished of these things, he do not humble himself, nay, become vile in his own Eyes, for having thus long entertained a high Opinion of himself; though so deficient in the very Rudiments and Beginnings of Religion; he is not likely to be much the better for any Sermon whatsoever, because he will relish none but those only, which feed his vain Conceit of himself, and of his high Attainments; and intimate Acquaintance with God, and Communion with him in his Ordinances; while he hath not a due Esteem of them, nor makes a right Improvement by them.

X.

But I hope these short Admonitions may put better Inclinations into those Mens Minds who will seriously think of them, and particularly beget in them a greater regard than is usually given to the Holy Word of God, read in our Churches. Which will dispose every one to profit better by all Sermons (which are but the Interpretation and Application of that Word) especially, if with due Devotion of Heart, they will joyn in the whole Service foregoing: By which they may profit (I have shown) as much, if not more, as by Sermons, if they be religiously disposed, and will come at the beginning of the Prayers, and with all humble Reverence attend upon every part of God's Worship.

For as he that is away from any part of the Sermon (says the same Person again) shall profit the less by that which he doth hear; so he that is away from any part of the Divine Service, gets the less good by that at which he is present: For there is no part of God's Service (not the *Confession*, not the *Prayers*, not the *Psalms*, not the *Blessing*) but it concerns every one, and every one may receive Edification by it, and will lose much of the Benefit he might have had, if he absent himself from it. A thing in which it seems many of them, who had *most Knowledge, and were the forwardest Professors* in those Days, did offend; which moved him to set out the Sins of those Men in several Respects and Considerations: Which it would be too long for me to mention; nor is it needful, if this that I have discoursed already be laid to Heart. And if Men will lay nothing close to their Consciences, all that can be said, or wrote, or preached, will do them no good; but they will be only Hearers or Readers, not Doers of the Word, deceiving their own Souls.

Wherefore laying aside (as St. Peter speaks, I. II. 1, 2.) all malice, and all guile (or deceit) and hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word (or that rational sincere Milk,
and

the pure Food of your Mind and Understanding, and not of your Fancy) *that you may grow thereby.* As certainly you will, when you become of the same Disposition; with little Children; void of Hatred, of Guile, of Wraths, of Dissimulation, and such-like evil Affections; and are of an humble, teachable, and submissive Spirit: For if every one had but such an *encrease of Grace*, as to hear meekly *God's Word*, and to receive it with pure *Affection*, they could not easily fail to *bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.*

So we pray in our Litany. And may it please God, as it there follows, to *bring into the way of truth all such as have erred, and are deceived*, for Jesus Christ his sake. *Amen.*

A N
A R G U M E N T
F O R
U N I O N,

Taken from the true Interest of those
Dissenters in England,
Who profess and call themselves
PROTESTANTS.

The INTRODUCTION.

I Take it for granted (seeing a Truth so very plain needs no formal Proof) that the ready way to overthrow a Church, is, first to divide it. It is also too manifest, that our Dissentions are *Divisions*, properly so called, or Publick Ruptures. It is true, notwithstanding these Ruptures, the Church still lives, and, in some good measure, prospers: But how mortal these Breaches may at last prove, through their Continuance and Increase, a Man who has but a Competency of Judgment, may easily foretel. It is therefore the Business of every good Man, as far as in him lies, to dissuade
with

with prudent Zeal from these Divisions, which are in their Nature so uncharitable, and so perillous in their Consequence.

Now one way of moving Men to desist from their Undertakings, is, the shewing of them, with calmness of Temper, and plainness of Reasoning, that their *Ends* are not likely to be obtain'd : As also, that by the *Means* they use, they will bring upon themselves those very Evils which they fear, and of the removal of which they have expectation.

Wherefore, I have chosen an *Argument* of this Nature, in order to the perswading of *Dissenters* to joyn in the Exercise of *Constant Communion* with the *Church of England*. And I have here endeavoured to make it evident to them, that in attempting to pull down this *Established Church*, they unwarily turn their own Force against themselves, and prepare Materials for the Tombs of their own Parties.

This *Argument* is here offered to them in the Spirit of Christian Charity, and without any design of exposing or exasperating any Person who differs in his Notions from the Sense of the Writer. For he had rather lie at the Feet of the meanest Man who is overtaken with an Error, than spurn insolently against him.

Now, in the managing of this Argument, it is necessary to shew two things ;

The Argument it self.

First, *What those Ends are which are proposed by the Dissenters ?* I mean those which seem, with any tolerable Colour of Reason, fit to be proposed ; and which are designed by the better and wiser of that Number.

Its Partition and Method.

Secondly, *What Reasons may make it manifest, that the Ends which they propose, can never be procured by the Dissettlement of the Church of England.*

These things being shewed, there shall follow such a Conclusion, as is suitable to the Premises.

First,

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The Ends of the Dissenters. *First*, For the Ends proposed by the more prudent Dissenters, they are of two kinds.

The first End is *Subordinate*.

The second is *Principal*; or the End to which the former serveth in the quality of the *Means*.

The *Subordinate End* is the *Establisbing of themselves*. And it hath two Branches.

Either the settling themselves (*First*) as a *National Church*.

Or, (*Secondly*) as several distinct Churches, giving undisturbed Toleration to one another.

For I am not willing to believe all of them to be given up to such a degree of Infatuation, as to be intent only upon beating down, without considering what is fit to be set up. That is the way of Tempests, and not of Builders.

The *Principal* is, the further Advancement of the Reformed Religion. This also, hath two Parts.

1. *The Removal of Popery.*

2. *The Introduction of the Protestant Religion in greater Purity and Perfection, than the Church of England is (in their Opinion) as yet arrived at, or can probably attain to by vertue of its present Constitution.*

If there be amongst them Men disturb'd in their Understandings, by the heat of *Enthusiasm*; if there be amongst them any Men whose Wisdom is sensual and worldly; who presumptuously make Heaven stoop to Earth, and conceal their private and secular Designs under the venerable Name of *Pure Religion*; I do not concern my self with them in this *Perswasive to Union*. The former cannot, and the latter will not be convinc'd: For there is no Ear so deaf as that which Interest hath stopp'd. And there is a great deal of earnest Truth suggested in the Jocular Speech of *James the Fifth of Scotland*; who, when his Treasurer desired the liberty

erty to be plain with him, * drew out his Sword, and said merily to him, I shall slay thee, if thou speak against my profit.

The first Branch of the First or Sub-ordinate End of the Dissenters is, the establishing of themselves as a National Church. The first Branch of the first End of the Dissenters; viz. Union in a National Church.

This is either designed by *All of them* or by a *Party* which believeth it self to be most sober, and most numerous, and most likely to prevail over the rest; so far at least as to be come the State-Party,

For *All of them* to expect to be united in one uniform Body, is to hope not only against the Grounds of Hope, but of Possibility.

For the Parties are very many, and very differing, (or rather very contrary) and they cannot frame amongst them any common Scheme in which their Assents can be united.

What Communion (for Example saith) can the Presbyterians have with *Arians, Socinians, Anabaptists, Fifth-Monarchy-Men, Sensual Millenaries, Behmenists, Familists, Seekers, Antinomians, Rantars, Sabbatarians, Quakers, Muggletonians, Sweet-Singers*. These may associate in a *Caravan*, but cannot joyn in the Communion of a Church. Such a Church would be like the *Family of Error*, and her Daughters described in Mr. *Spencer's Fairy Queen*, of which none were alike, unless in this, that they were all deform'd: And how shall the *Christians of this present Church* be disposed of to their just Satisfaction! They will never Incorporate with such a medly of Religions; and they are such, but for their Quality and their Number, as not be beneath a very serious Consideration.

For

* Melvil's Memoirs. p. 2.

For the *Prevalent Party*, there seemeth to be both *Reason* and *Experience* against their Hopes of establishing themselves as a *National Church*.

These Reasons, amongst others, have moved me to entertain this Perswasion concerning them.

First, Such a Party not maintaining *Episcopal Government*, which hath obtained here from the Times of the *Britains* (who, in the Apostolical Age, received the *Christian Religion*) and which is so agreeable to the Scheme of the *Monarchy*; It is not probable that they should easily procure an Exchange of it for a newer Model, by the general Consent of Church or State. I may add, the Body of the People of *England*, whose *Genius* renders them tenacious of their ancient Customs.

Again, All the Parties amongst us have of late declared for mutual Forbearance. They cannot therefore be consistent with themselves, if they frame such a National Constitution, by which any Man, who dissents from it, shall be otherwise dealt with, than by personal Conference; which also he must have liberty not to admit, if he be perswaded it is not fit or safe for him. And such a Body, without any other Nerves for its Strength and Motion, for the Encouragement of those who are Members of it, and the Discouragement of those who refuse its Communion, will not long hold together: Nor hath it Means in it sufficient for the Ends to which it is designed. And indeed by this means, the Spiritual Power of Excommunication will be rendred of none Effect. For, what Punishment, what Shame, what Check will it be to cross and perverse Men, if being shut out of the *National Church*, they may with open Arms, and with Applause due to real Converts, be received into this or the other particular Congregation, as it best suiteth with their good liking?

Further-

Furthermore, it is commonly said, that since the Presbyterians have gathered Churches out of Churches, there are not many true and proper *Disciplinarians* in England.

If it be so, then *Independency*, is amongst Dissenters the prevalent side ; and I know not how a *National Church* can be made up of Separate Independent Churches ; for each Congregation is a Church by it self, and hath, besides the general Covenant of Baptism, a particular Church Covenant ; and therefore it is difficult to imagine how all of them can be, by any Coherence of the Parts, united into one entire Society.

But be it supposed that the *Disciplinarians* are of all Parties the most numerous and prevalent ; yet Experience sheweth how hard a Work it is for all of them to form themselves into a Church of England. In the late Times of Publick Disquiet, they had great Power ; they had, in humane Appearance, fair and promising Opportunities ; and yet there grew up at their Roots another Party, which, in conclusion, over-dropped them, and brought their Interest into a sensible Decay ; it being the nature of every Faction, upon Victory obtained over their common Adversary, to sub-divide. In the Year 1640, * *The Commons had a debate about a new form of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction : And they agreed that every Shire should be a several Diocess. That there should be constituted, in each Shire, a Presbytery of Twelve Divines, with a President, as a Bishop over them. That this President, with the Assistance of some of the Presbyters, should Ordain, Suspend, Deprive, Degrade, Excommunicate. That there should be a Diocesan Synod once a Year ; and each third Year a National Synod. A while after † it was voted*

* July 17. 1640. *Whitlock's Memorials*, p. 45.

† A. 1644. *Id. ibid.* p. 117.

voted by them, That to have a Presbytery in the Church, was according to the Word of God.

Many other steps were made in favour of the Discipline. The *Common-Prayer-Book* was removed: an Assembly of Divines was Established: Their Directory was introduced; they were united in the Bond of a solemn League and Covenant. There was sent up * from the Country of *Lancaster*, a Petition signed with 12000 Hands for the settling of Classes in those Parts. A Petition of the like importance was framed by divers of the Common Council of *London*. They seemed nigh the gaining of their Point; yet they widely missed of it. There was in the Assembly it self, a ferment of Dissention. Mr. *Sympson*, and some others favoured an *Independent*; Mr. *Selden*, and some of his Admirers, an *Erastian* Interest. There was a Party in the Nation who were then called *Dissenting Brethren*; and to these the Directory was as offensive, as the Canons and Liturgy had been to those of the *Discipline*. They drew up Reasons † against the *Directory of Church Government* by Presbyters.

They afterwards Printed an open Remonstrance against Presbytery, of which the Assembly complained to the House of a Scandalous Libel. And there were those who || reproach'd the Presbyterians in the same Phrases in which they had given vent to their Displeasure against the Liturgy of the Church of *England*. The Ministers of *Lancashire* ** complained concerning them, *That they had compared the Covenant to the Alcoran of the Turks, and Mass of the Papists, and Service-Book of the Prelates.* As likewise, that they

* In Sep. 15. 1646. Diurnal, p. 1313. *Whitlock's Memoirs*, p. 187.

† Id. id. p. 116. A 44.

|| Ib. A. 45. p. 189.

** Harm. Consent, p. 20.

they said, it was a Brazen Serpent, fit to be broken in pieces and ground to Powder, rather than that Men should fall down and worship it.

Amongst the *Disciplinarians*, some were confident of success. One of them * (for he was not then gone over to the part of the *Independents*) expressed his Assurance in these most unbecoming Words, before the Commons. It will (said he) bring such a Blot on God, as he shall never wipe out, if your poor Prayers should be turned into your own Bosoms; that Prayer for Reformation. A Speech not fit to have been repeated, if it were not necessary to learn Sobriety of Wisdom from the Remembrances of Extravagance in former Times.

Others acknowledged their Hopes, but did not dissemble their Fears. Six Years ago (said a Person eminent † amongst them) after this Parliament had sate a while, it was generally believ'd that [the Woman] the Church was fallen into her Travel——but she continues still in pain; insomuch as they begin to think she hath not gone her full time, and earnestly desire she may; because they fear nothing more than an abortive Reformation.

Others did openly confess that their Hopes were not answer'd, and that the State of Religion was much declined. The Ministers of the Province of London //used upon this occasion, these passionate Words: Instead of a Reformation, we may say with Sighs, what our Enemies said of us heretofore with scorn, we have a Deformation in Religion.

Those *Independents* who adher'd to that part of the House which joyned with the Army, prevailed for a Season, but they also were disturbed by those who

* Mr. S. Symp. in Serm. of Reform. A. 1643. p. 29.

† D. John. Arr. in Ser. call'd *The Great Wonder*, &c. before the Commons, A. 1646. p. 36.

|| Testim. to Truth of Jesus Christ subscribed Dec. 14. 1647.

who went under the name of *Lilburnists, Levellers, Agitators*. * *Then likewise, Gerard Winstanly* † published the Principles of *Quakerism*, discoursing (or rather, repeating the Dreams of his Imagination) in such Expressions as these: *If you look for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.*——*Every man hath the Light of the Father within himself, which is the Mighty Man Christ Jesus.* Then *Enthusiasm*, excited in part by the common pretence of an extraordinary Light, revealed (as of a sudden) in those days in *England*, brake forth into open Distraction. Then *Joseph Salmon* a present Member of the Army, published his Blasphemies, and defended his Immoralities. He justified himself, and those of his way, saying, || *That it was God who did Swear in them, and that it was their Liberty to keep Company with Women for their Lust.* *Wyke*, his Disciple **, killed a Soldier three times, and said, *I Breath the Spirit of God into thee.* *Salmon* himself Printed a Pamphlet call'd *a Rout*, in which he set forth his villainous self as the Christ of God, saying ††, *I am willing to become Sin for you, though the Lord in me knows no Sin. We love to sweat drops of Blood under all Mens offences.*——*We shall see of the Travel of our Souls.* *Enthusiasm*, tho' not in this rankness of it, was now openly favour'd by *Cromwel* himself; who, together with Six Soldiers, prayed and preached at *Whitehal*. |||| His own temper was warmed with fits of *Enthusiasm*. And he confessed it to a Person of Condition *** (from whom

* See Hist. of *Indep.* 2 part. p. 168.

† In *Myst. of Godlin.* &c. Anno 1649. *Wynst. in Saints Paradise.* C. 5. p. 54. &c.

|| *Whitlock's Memoirs.* A. 1649. p. 430.

** Id. *ibid.*

†† *Salmon's Rout.* in Pref. and p. 10, 11, &c.

|||| On. Sund. after *East. day* Ann. 1649. H. of *Indep.* part. 2. p. 153.

*** See *View of the late Trouble.* p. 366.

whom I receiv'd it, as did others, yet living) that he prayed according to extraordinary *Impulse*. And that, not feeling such *Impulse* (which he called *Supernatural*) he did forbear to pray, oftentimes, for several days together.

In process of time, his *House of Commons* and he himself were publickly disturb'd by that wild Spirit, in the raising of which they had been so unhappily instrumental. A *Quaker* came to the Door of the House *, and drew his Sword, and cut those nigh him, and said, *He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to kill every Man who sate in that Convention*. And he himself was not only conspired against by those who called themselves *the free and well affected People of England* †, but openly bespattered by the Ink of the *Quakers* in several Pamphlets ||, and by their Clamours, affronted in his own *Chapel*; where before his Face, they gave bold Interruptions to his Preachers**.

Other Historical Memorials might be here produced, relating to the hopeful *Rise* and mighty *Progress*, and equal *Declension* of the *Disciplinarian Party*. But, in such Cases, I choose rather to take off my Pen, than to lean too hard upon it. Yet the Nature of my Argument did necessarily lead me to the former Remarks; and if useful Truth smarts, let Guilt suffer a Cure, and not kick against the Charitable Reporter.

In sum, the longer the Church of *England* was dissettled, the greater daily grew the Confusion; and the Division of Sects was multiplyed, not unlike to that of Winds in the Mariners Compass, in which Artifics have encreas'd the Partitions, from four, to two and thirty. Insomuch that the very Distractions

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R

which

* *Whitl. Memoirs. A. 1654. p. 592.*

† See their Declar. in A. 1655. in *Whitl. Mem. p. 606.*

|| See Ed. Burroughs *Trumpet of the Lord sounded. p. 2. A. 56.*

** *Whitl. Memoirs. p. 624.*

which were among us did in some measure, prepare the Way for the Return of the King, and the Restitution of the Church: Men finding no other common Bottom on which the Interest of Religion and civil Peace might be established.

Now, if the Dissenters could not then, when so fair Opportunities were in their Hands, carry on their Cause to any tolerable Settlement; much less may they now hope to do it: For there are now many hindrances which did not then lie cross their way.

First, The Platform of Discipline, so highly applauded, so earnestly contended for, during the Reigns of Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James*, hath now been in part tryed; and the presence of it (to omit other Reasons) hath abated the Reverence some had for it.

Secondly, There is not at this time such an Union amongst Dissenters, as appeared at the beginning of our late Troubles. The number of those Dissenters who were not for the *Discipline*, was then very inconsiderable. But in a few years they brake, as it were, into Fractions of Fractions. Infomuch, that the *Ministers* of the *Province* of *London*, expressed the Estate of things in the Year 47, on this manner; * *In stead of Unity and Uniformity in Matters of Religion, we are torn in pieces with Distractions, Schisms, Separations, Divisions, and Sub-divisions.*

Thirdly, Those who then favoured the *Discipline*, are much departed from their former Scheme of Government, inclining to *Independency*, which they once denied to be *God's Ordinance* †, and pleading for Toleration, which they once called, *The last and strongest hold of Satan.*

Fourthly,

* Testim. to the Truth of J. C. p. 30.

† Mr. *Herl. &c.* The Title of Mr. *Edward's* Book 1647. See Testim. of Min. p. 20.

Fourthly, At the beginning of our Disturbances, many Men of Quality, and such who had a Zeal of God, favoured the Settlement of the *Discipline* in the simplicity of their Hearts. They had not then seen any Revolutions; they had not discovered the secret Springs of Publick Motions; nor the vile Interests of many Men, which lay concealed under the Disguise of *pure Religion*. They saw (what all Men may see in all Times) abuses in Church and State; and the very name of *Reformation* was sweet to them.

Now, notwithstanding the sincere Zeal, and the Power of these Men, the *Discipline* could not be long carried on; much less could it be perfected by them.

There is therefore at this time a much greater Improbability of Success in the like Design: For many considerable Men, piously inclined, have seen their Error, and will not be a second time engaged: And they will not say of our late Changes, as the Protector did, * *That they were the Revolutions of God, and not Human Designs; That they were the Revolutions of Christ, upon whose Shoulders the Government was stayed.* They are not of the same Mind with him who told the Commons, † *That if they acted Faith, then the Records of those Times on their side, should bear thus to all Posterity, the Book of the Wars and Counsels of God.*

Also, since those days, through the luxation of Discipline during the Licence of the War, the Discovery of great and black Hypocrisies, the multiplication of Parties and Opinions, the publishing of many lewd and irreligious Books from unlicens'd Presses, *Atheism* hath made very formidable Advances.

R 2

And

* Oliver's Speech in the Painted Chamber, Jan. 22. 54. at the Dissolving of the Parliament, p. 29, 33.

† Mr. Caryl in Ep. Ded. bef. Ser. called *The Arraign of Unbelief*. A. 45.

244 *An Argument for Union, &c.*

And they say that some undisguised *Scepticks* and *Atheists* have, some time since the King's Return, been much used in the Cause of our Dissenters. Now if well-meaning Zeal could not establish the Discipline, it is not likely to be promoted, much less settled, by the help of such Hands of which the out-sides are not washed by so much as an External Form of Godliness.

The Second Branch of the first End of the Dissenters, viz. Union by mutual forbearance.

The second Branch of the first End of Dissenters seems more improbable than the first, viz. The settling themselves as several distinct Parties, giving undisturb'd Toleration to each other.

This seems not probable upon many accounts.

First, Some Dissenters believe some of the Parties to be incapable of Forbearance, as maintaining Principles destructive of Christian Faith and Piety. This Opinion they still have (for instance sake) of *Antinomians*, *Quakers*, and *Muggletonians*.

And they formerly declaimed against the Toleration of divers others. They published here (by Authority so called) an Act of the Assembly at *Edinburgh**, against *Erasians*, *Independents*, and Liberty of Conscience, bearing (as they speak) their publick Testimony against them, not only as contrary to sound Doctrine, but as more special Letts and Hindrances, as well to the Scottish received Doctrine, Discipline, and Government, as to the Work of Reformation and Uniformity in England and Ireland.

The Ministers of the Province within the County Palatine of Lancaster, in their Harmonious Consent † with the Ministers of the Province of London, published their Judgments in these zealous Words. A Toleration would be a putting of a Sword into a mad Man's hand

* A. 1647. Act of Assemb. p. 2.

† Harmon. Consent. A. 1648. p. 12.

hand———*An appointing a City of Refuge in Mens Consciences for the Devil to fly to———A proclaiming Liberty to the Wolves to come into Christ's Fold to prey upon his Lambs———A Toleration of Soul-murther (the greatest Murther of all others) and for the establishing whereof, damned Souls in Hell would accurse Men on Earth. Neither would it be to provide for tender Consciences, but to take away all Conscience.———If Error be not forcibly kept under, it will be Superiour.*

It seems, they were not then of the latter Perswasion of the Protector, who said * concerning the People of several Judgments in this Land, *That they were All the Flock of Christ, and the Lambs of Christ, though perhaps under many unruly Passions and Troubles of Spirit, whereby they gave disquiet to themselves and others: And that they were not so to God as to us.*

Again, There is no firmness or social influence in the nature of this Union. It is the Union of a Multitude who meet and disperse at pleasure: And he who proposeth this way as the Means to knit Men into Christian Communion, is like a Projector, who should design the keeping of the Stones together in the strength of a firm and lasting House, by forbearing the use of Cement. The Union that lasteth, is that of the Concord of Members in a uniform Body.

Moreover, It is to be considered, that there are no Parties in this or any other Nation, so exactly poized that they have equal Numbers and Interests. There is always one of them which over-ballanceth the rest: And one of the several Ways must always be favoured as the Religion of the State. And it is natural for the strongest Side to attempt the subduing of the weaker. And though this be not soon effected, yet till one Side getteth the Mastery, the Parties remain, not as distinct Bodies settled in Peace
within

* Protector's Speech, Jan. 22. 1654. p. 28.

within themselves, and towards each other, but as Convulsions in the common Body of the State.

Some think this Inclination to the swallowing up of all other Parties to be found almost only in the *Romish* Church.

But here is something of it to be discerned (I will not say in all Churches,) seeing I will understand the good Being of our own, which suffered *Bonner* himself to live, yet in all Factions and Parties; though the inequality of Power makes it not seem to be alike in all of them.

The Cat hath the same inward Parts with the Lion, though they differ much in size: And some such likewise they will find who dissect Human Nature and Bodies Civil.

There is this Disposition in Men, whether they be the Politick, or the Conscientious.

The External Practice of all Parties is answerable to this inward Disposition.

There is this inward Disposition in Men who espouse any Faction, whether their Ends be Designs of State or of Religion.

Parties who are not (otherwise than in shew) concerned for Religion, will perpetually covet Power after Power. And Parties who are serious and conscientious in their Way, whatsoever it is, will not remain in an indifference of Terms towards those who tread in contrary Paths, and with whom they do not maintain Communion. For therefore they withdraw from them, because they believe Communion with them to be unlawful. Otherwise they have no Judgment in the Price of Peace and Unity, if they willingly part with it, when they may without Sin enjoy it; and if they esteem their Way sinful, and believe those Persons who remain without their Pale, to be so gone astray, as without Repentance, to be eternally lost; Charity it self will urge them to use all Means probable towards the reducing

of them. And they will be apt to think, that the suffering of them in their Wandrings, declares them to be contented with their Condition.

External Practice of all Parties does shew plainly what is their inward Disposition.

All would do what is good in their own Eyes; but I do not perceive that any are willing to let others do so. Where there is Power, there is little Forbearance: And the same Men, as their Conditions alter, speak of *Mercy* or *Justice*.

Amongst those of the Party of *Donatus*, whose Schism opened so dangerous a Wound into the Churches of *Africa*; all pleaded earnestly for Forbearance, whilst their Power was in its Minority. Yet St. *Austin* remindeth one of them * of a Practice contrary to their Profession, whilst they turn'd against the *Maximianists* the edge of the *Theodosian Laws*; and abus'd the Power which they had gotten under *Julian*, in oppressing, as far as in them lay, the Catholick Christians.

Amongst those of the Protestant Perswasion, the Heads of the Discipline were plainly unwilling that any should have leave to make a Separation from their Body. And one of them †, with a mixture of Grief and Expostulation, thus discoursed before the Commons.

'The famous City of London is become an Amsterdam; Separation from Our Churches is countenanced; Toleration is cried up; Authority lieth asleep.' Every one would have Power to rouse up it self, and maintain his Cause. And indeed it is, and has been too often in Religion, as it is and was in Philosophy,

R 4

Where

* Petil. ap. S. Aug. cont. Petil. l. 2. *Ab sit, Absit à nostra Conscientia ut ad nostram fidem aliquem compellamus, &c.*

† Mr. Calamy in Sermon called *The great Danger of Covenant refusing*. An. 46. p. 3.

Where the divers Sects do not contend meerly for the enlarging the bounds of Philosophical Arts in a sincere and solid Enquiry*, but for the Translating the Empire of Opinion, and settling it upon themselves. The same Men who pleaded for Forbearance in this Church, and removed themselves into New-England (as by themselves was said) for the Liberty of their Conscience or Perswasion; when once they arrived there, and made a figure in that Government, they refused Indulgence to the Anabaptists and Quakers, and used them (as to this day they do) with great Severity. Those Commons who in the Year 47† made an Order, For the giving of Indulgence to tender Consciences; did at the same time make another Order, That this Indulgence should not extend to tolerate such who used the Common-Prayer.

Some who do not well understand the Policy of the Dutch, do believe it to be otherwise in those Netherlands. But by their Constitution, none have liberty to speak against any Publick Error or Corruption on which the States shall stamp their Authority. And Episcopus ‖ complained that the Calvinists would tolerate none whom they had power to punish. There are now great Numbers of his own Remonstrant Party, who, when any Juncture of Affairs gives them Encouragement, are apt to contend for Superiority. The Parties in their Sermons and Writings, speak with bitter Zeal against each other: And where the ordinary Conversation of Men of different Judgments is peaceable amongst them; divers who mind Traffick more than Religion, seem rather to be an Heterogenious Body, frozen together by a cold Indifference, than a Society united by Christian Love.

In

* Lord Bacon's Pref. to Adv. of Learning.

† Whitlock's Memoirs, p. 276.

‖ Episc. Exam. Thes. Cap. Op. Vol. 1. Par. 2. p. 185.

In the Church of Rome the several Orders who at present mortally hate one another, if they were not restrained by the force of the common Polity, they would soon devour one another. We are not without a remarkable Instance in this kind, published by a *Dominican Bishop*, and a *Capuchin Fryer*. Certain *Dominicans* * had seated themselves nigh the River of Plate in *Paraguay*, where there are Gold Mines in the Earth, and Gold Sands in the Rivers. Of this the *Jesuits*, who have long Ears, had good Intelligence. They desired to go thither in order to the further Instruction of the *American People*, and the Education of Youth. They obtained leave, procured Letters of Credence, were furnished with Money for the Voyage. After having gotten sure footing, they soon removed the *Dominicans* and *Spanish* Laity, and established themselves.

Among the *Socinians*, the great Asserters of Liberty in Religion, both in Thinking and Speaking; though they cannot impose, because they have not yet been any where (that I know of) the prevailing Party; yet they shew sometimes what Spirit they are of.

Gittichius was, beyond all good Manners, troublesome to a *Socinian* of better Temper (I mean † *Ruarus*) because he had chosen to Fast one day in a Week, and had taken *Friday* for the day, though without any fixed purpose.

Among the *Quakers* themselves, whose Principle seems to be the Guidance of each Man by his personal Perswasion, there want not Signs of that fierce Heat with which their Light is accompanied. When some had formed them into a Society, and gotten the Governance into their Hands, they *Excommunicated* others;

* See *Lettres sinceres. Trois partie. Sixieme Lettre*, p. 111.

† *Ruari. Epist. par. 1. p. 415, 416.*

others; they suffered them not to Marry or Bury in their manner, who would not be guided by what they called the *Light of the Body*, and the *Light of Ancient Friends**. George Fox declared he had Power to bind and loose whom he pleased†, and said in a great Assembly || *that he never lik'd the word Liberty of Conscience, and would have no liberty given to Presbyterians, Papists, Independents, and Baptists.*

The Principal End of the Dissenters, the first part of it.

From the *Subordinate End* of the Dissenters, I pass to the *Principal*; and begin with the *first part* of it, the removal of Popery. A very good and commendable End. And I heartily pray to God to prosper all Christians who pursue it by fit and lawful ways.

But the Methods of Dissenters do not so well lead to it as those of the established Church.

Bare Reason maketh this manifest. It may be also proved to us by *Historical Inference*.

This likewise is the *Judgment of the Papists themselves*, who take their Measures from this Principle, that they shall enter in through the Breaches of the Church of England.

First, Common Reason sheweth, that the Interruption which may by Dissention be given to this Church, will rather weaken than improve the *Protestant Interest*, both at Home and Abroad.

Abroad, the Protestant Interest will suffer much in the overthrow of this Church. For, by such means, a principal Wheel is taken out of the Frame of the Reformation. Nay, *Signior Diodati* ** was wont to praise it in a more excellent Metaphor, and to

* See Spirit of the Heart, p. 12, 13, &c.

† P. 27.

|| P. 41.

** *Florentissima Anglia Ocellus ille Ecclesiarum Peculium Christi singulare, &c.*

to call it the *Eye of the Reformed Churches*; and it is plain to considering Men, that the *Church of England*, which had greater regard to the Primitive Pattern than some others of the Reformation, can give a more full and unperplexed Answer to all the Objections of the *Romanists*, than some other Churches, who are cramped in a few Points unwarily admitted. If therefore Dissentions put out this Eye of the *Protestant Churches*, the dark Doctrines and Traditions of Popery will the sooner spread themselves over Reformed *Christendom*.

At Home, the Dissettlement of the Church of England will sooner introduce than root out Popery. I am constrain'd thus to judge by the following Considerations.

First, The design of keeping out Popery by the Ruin of this Church, is like the preposterous way of securing the Vineyard by pulling up of the Fence, or of keeping out of the Enemy by the removal of our Bulwark; under that name this Church is commonly spoken of, and they do not flatter it who gave it that Title. Its Constitution is Christian, and it is strong in its Nature; and if such a Church hath not ability (with God's assistance) to resist the Assaults of *Romish Power*, much less have they who dissent from it. And it is *Fanaticism* properly so called, or Religious Frenzy, to lay aside a more propable Means, and to trust that God will give, to Means which are much less probable, supernatural Aid and Success.

God supporteth a good Cause by weak Means (if they are the only means he hath put into our Power) against a bad Cause, though externally potent. But he, who in Cases of Emergence assisteth honest Impotence and Infirmary, will never work Miracles in favour of Mens Presumptions and Indiscretions.

The *Romanists* are a mighty Body of Men; and though there are Intestine Fewds betwixt the Secular and Regular Clergy, as likewise betwixt the several

veral Orders, yet they are all united into one common Polity, and grafted into that one Stock of the Papal Headship. They are favoured in many places by great Men; they have variety of Learning; they pretend to great Antiquity, to Miracles, to Martyrs without number, to extraordinary Charity and Mortification; they have the Nerves of Worldly Power, that is, Banks of Money, and a large Revenue: They have a Scheme of Policy always in readiness; there are great numbers of Emissaries posted in all places for the conveying of Intelligence, and the gaining of Profelytes; they take upon them all Shapes, and are bred to all the worldly Arts of Insinuation: There is given to their Way, in the *Jargon* of Mr. Coleman*, a very fit name of *Trade, Traffick, Merchandise*.

Against all this Craft and Strength, what (under God) can *Protestants* oppose which is equal to the Power of the Church of *England*? A Church Primitive, Learned, Pure, and not embased with the mixtures of Enthusiasm or Superstition!

A Church, which is able to detect the Forgeries and Impostures of *Rome*, which hath not given advantage to her by running from her into any Extream; which is a National Body already form'd; a Body both *Christian* and *Legal*! a Body which commendeth it self to the Civil Powers by the Loyalty of its Constitution! a Body which hath in it great Numbers of People judiciously devout, and who are judged only to be few †, because they are not noisie, but prudent, though truly exemplary, in their Religion!

And there is in the Church of *England* something more considerable than Number, for
Union

* *Coll. of Lett.* p. 8, &c.

† See *L. deMoulin's Advances*, &c. p. 75.

Union is stronger than Multitude. Take the Character of this Church from Monsieur *Daille**, a Man whose Circumstances were not likely to lead him into this Matter, into any partiality of Judgment; and who, at that time, was engaged in a learned Controversie with one of our Divines. The Character is this: *As to the Church of England, purged from Foreign wicked Superstitious Worships and Errors, either impious or dangerous, by the Rule of the Divine Scriptures, approved by so many and such illustrious Martyrs, abounding with Piety towards God, and Charity towards Men, and with most frequent Examples of Good Works, flourishing with an encrease of most learned and wise Men from the beginning of the Reformation to this time; I have always had it in just esteem, and till I die, I shall continue in the same due veneration of it.* And indeed it is to me a matter of astonishment, that any Men who have been beyond the Seas, and made Observations upon other Churches and States, should be displeased at ours, which so much excel them.

Now, is it probable that such a Church as this is, should have less strength in it for the resisting of Popery, than an inferiour number of divided Parties, of which the most sober and most accomplish'd, is neither so Primitive, nor so Learned, nor so United, nor so Numerous, nor so Legal; and against which it will be objected by the *Romans*, that it is of yesterday?

Among these Parties *there are some who have not fully declared themselves.* And who knows whether they have not a Reserve for the *Romish* Religion, against a favourable Opportunity, though sometimes they speak of *Rome* as of *Babylon*? I mean those People who are called *Quakers*, who speak in general of their *Light*, and in such a doubtful Manner, that
in-

* *De Confess. Advers. H. Hammond. c. 1. p. 97, 98.*

inquisitive Men cannot yet understand from what Quarter of the Heavens it shineth. The Men of design amongst them may embrace any Religion, and the Melancholy will make a tolerable Order amongst the *Romans*; and the Priest will find for them a second St. *Bruno*.

Again, There are some who though they have declared themselves against Popery, yet they had scarce any formed way of keeping it out: For what hindreth a crafty Jesuit from gathering a particular Congregation out of many others, and modelling of it by degrees according to his pleasure? And what a Gap do they leave open for Seducers, who take out of the way all Legal Tests, and admit Men who are Strangers to them, to officiate amongst them, upon bare pretence of Spiritual Illumination?

Furthermore, the *Romanists* have more powerful ways of drawing Men from the Parties of the *Dissenters*, than they have of enticing them from the Church of *England*; for such Men (too frequently) go out from us through weakness of Imagination, for which the Church of *Rome* hath variety of Grati-
fications.

They will offer, to the *Severe*, such Strictnesses as are not consistent with the general Laws of a National Church, which being framed for Men of such various *Conditions*, must have some Scope and Latitude, though no Licence in it; and many of those who now joyn themselves to the Dissenting Parties, would then chuse to be admitted as Members of this or the other Superstitious Fraternity: And it is (at least) my private Conjecture, that if the Revenue of the Religious Houses which were dissolved, had been judiciously applied to the Service of Men, either weak in Mind, or indisposed by Temper, or singular in their *Inclinations*, amongst the Reformed, there might have been a Diversity
here

here (I mean such as there is in our present Colleges) without a Schism.

Likewise, they have *Mental Prayer*, and (as they call them) *Spiritual Eructations*, for those who condemn or scruple *Forms**.

They have *mystical Phrases* for such who think they have a new Notion when they darken Understanding with Words. And accordingly, the third part of the *Rule of Perfection* (a very mystical Book, written by Father *Benet*, a *Capuchin*) was, in the year 46, reprinted in *London* † with a new Title, and without the name of the Author; and it passed, amongst some of the Parties, for a Book containing very sublime Evangelical Truths. And it pleased some *Enthusiasts*, when they read in it, *That Christ's Passion was to be practis'd, and beheld as it was in our selves, rather than that which is considered at Jerusalem* ||.

Also, they use much Gesture, and great shew of Zeal in preaching, and have singular ways of moving the zealous Temper of the *English*, from whence some of them, in *Rome* it self, had the name of *Knock-breasts* ** given to them. A *Romish* Preacher comes forth out of an obscure Cloyster into the Pulpit, and appears all Heavenly in the Exercise. And having excited a warmth in their Affection, he retires again, and does not mix with Conversation, and is not observed (as other Ministers) by many Eyes; and the People never seeing him but in this Divine Figure, look upon him as an Angel coming to them out of Heaven, and then ascending thither again.

It

* See *Rational Discourse of Prayer*, chiefly of *Mystic. Contempl.*

c. 14. p. 74.

† *A bright Star centring in Christ our Perfection*. Printed for H. Overton in Popes-head Alley, 1646.

|| Ch. 18. p. 189.

** *Piccia-petti Inglese*, S. R. C. *Posth.* 115.

It may be observed also, that the *Romanists* have greater *shews of Self-denial* for the moving of *English* Piety, than the *Dissenters*. They have rough Cords, mean Garments, bare Feet, Disciplines, Whips, Pretences of not touching Money, or enjoying Property, though some of these are often no other than Arts used by ordinary Beggars.

Again, they have ways not only of humouring the *Infirmity*, but even the *Fopishness* of Human Nature. *Processions*, and other Rites of the *Romish* Religion, are so ordered as to be Games for Diversion; and the *Masques with Scenes* pleaseth, though it be not understood.

Dissenters do now think that Popery may be very easily subdued by their Arms; but if Recluses were once crept out of their dark Cells (as Serpents from under the deadly Night-shade) they would have cause to alter their Opinions, and not to think too highly of themselves, after a wilful removal of the Church of *England*, which is sufficient (under God) for this Encounter. This Church designs to make Men Good, by making them first Judicious, as far as Means can do it. But some others desire to bring them to their Side by catching of their Imaginations; and by that way they can neither reform nor fix them. Some new Device shall, in time, bring them over to a new Party.

Dissention it self amongst *Protestants* weakeneth their Interest; and that which weakens one Side strengthens another.

And many Men, entangled in Controversie, and wearied with endless Wrangling, are too apt, for meer ease and quiet sake, to cast themselves, in servile manner, into the Arms of pretended *Infallibility*.

Our Dissentions have already introduced too much of that which is the very Spirit of *Jesuitism*, the doing of Evil that pretended Good may come of it,
the

the serving of a Cause by any Means, whether they be just or unjust.

Some Dissenters do accidentally prepare the way for *Romish* Religion, by running into another Extream upon pretence of avoiding Popery, by decrying the Church of *England* as *Antichristian* and *Popish*, and by condemning that as *Popish*, which is Christian and Decent. [As Episcopacy, Liturgy, Observations of the Nativity of Christ, and other Festivals, Reverence of Bodily Gesture, particularly in receiving the Holy Communion, Preservation of Places and Things set apart for holy Uses, with Reverend Care.] By this means they bring Popery into Reputation. Men will be apt to say, if such a Body as the Church of *England* be *Popish*, it is fit we sit down and consider of it; for surely they are not so enclined without weighty Reasons. If the Clergy of it be enclined to that Religion, the Introduction of which, together with great Numbers of the *Popish* Clergy, will diminish their Preferment; it must be the Power of the Truth which moveth them against their Worldly Interest. They will continue their Argument, and say further, If such good things as these above-mentioned be *Romish*, and it be lawful to judge of the whole by the parts of it which are before us, surely that which is *Popish*, is also Primitive and Evangelical. That which we have examined is good, and that which we have not, may probably be of the same kind.

Secondly, The History of our late Revolutions sheweth, that Popery will not be smother'd in the Ruins of the Church of *England*, but rather be advanced upon them.

It made great progress in the late Times; insomuch, that the Dissenters do remove the Odium of the late King's execrable Murther from themselves, and lay it upon the *Jesuits*, thereby tacitly acknow-

ledging, that they had so great a Power over some of them, as to make them to become their Instruments for the cutting off the *Lord's Anointed*. For if they will not allow *Cromwel* and *Ireton*, and some others of that Order, to have been Dissenters, properly so called; yet certainly they must not deny that Name to *Mr. Peters*, *Mr. John Goodwin*, and many like to them, who appeared publicly in that very black and insolent Wickedness. How far it is true that the Jesuits influenc'd those Counsels, I do not now examine, nor does my Talent lie in Mysteries of State. But that in the late Revolutions, Popery was not routed out, no Man can remain ignorant who is of competent Age, and had not perfectly lost the use of his Memory, though he has made the most negligent Observations.

Robert Mentit de Salmonet * a Scotchman, and a Secular Priest, in actual exercise of Communion with the Church of *Rome*, hath publicly taken notice of the many Priests slain at *Edge-Hill*, and of two Companies of *Walloons* and other *Catholicks* (as he is pleased to stile them) in the Service of the States.

It hath been commonly said † that *Gifford* the Jesuite appeared openly in the Year 47, amongst the *Agitators*, and that his Pen was used in the Paper drawn up at a Committee in the Army, and called the *Agreement of the People*. || *K. Charles* the Martyr speaketh of such things as notorious, in one of his printed Declarations, ** *All men know* (said he) *the great number of Papists which serve in their Army, Commanders, and others.*

* *Hist. des troubles de la grand, Bret. à Paris 1661. l. 3. p. 163.*
See *short view of the late Troubles. p. 564.*

† *Arbit. Government. p. 28.*

|| See *Whitl. Memoirs. p. 279, 280, 282.*

** *Exact Col. p. 647.*

In the year 49, * Those in the House were acquainted with divers Papers, taken in a French-man's Trunk at Rye, discovering a Popish Design to be set on foot in England, with Commissions from the Bishop of Chalcedon, by Authority of the Church of Rome, to Popish Priests, and others for settling the Discipline of the Romish Church in England and Scotland.

Mr. Edwards † reports, from Mr. Mills a Common-Council-Man, who was so informed by a knowing Papist, that the Romanists did generally shelter themselves under the Vizor of Independency. It is certain, that a College of Jesuits was established at Come || in the year 52. And in a Paper found there, mention was made of 155 reconciled that year to the Church of Rome. Oliver himself used these words in a Declaration publish'd by the Advice of his Council: ** *It is not only commonly observed, but there remains with us somewhat of Proof, that Jesuits have been found among some discontented Parties in this Nation, who are observed to quarrel and fall out with every Form or Administration in the Church or State.* Dr. Bayly †† the Romanist openly courted Oliver as the present hopes of Rome, and with a Flattery as gross as the Jingle was ridiculous, called him *Oliva Vera*: and one of his Physicians ||| hath said of him, that he was once negotiating with the Romanists for Toleration, but brake off the Bargain, partly because they came not up to his price, and partly because he feared it would be offensive to the People. It is also publickly told us, *** that an Agreement

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* Id. ibid. p. 405.

† Gangrena, p. 10. par. 2.

|| Narr. sent up to the Lords from the Bishop of Hereford. p. 7.

** Prot. Declaration Off. 31. 1655.

†† In the Life of Bish. Fisher p. 260, 261.

||| V. Elench. Mot. par. 2 p. 341.

(***) H. Indep. part. 2. p. 245, &c.

was made in 49, even with *Owen O Neal*, that bloody *Romanist*; and that he, in pursuance of the Interest of the State, so called, raised the Siege of *London-derry*.

A great Door was opened to *Romish* Emissaries when the Oaths of *Allegiance* and *Supremacy* were, by publick Order taken away: For they were Tests of *Romanism*. Likewise the Doctrine of the unlawfulness of an Oath, reviv'd in those days, by *Roger Williams*, * *Samuel Gorton*, and others, helped equivocating Papists, to an Evasion, as (I fear) it may do, at this day, among the Quakers. So we may be induced to believe, by comparing present with former Transactions. For we are informed, that in the Reign of King *James*, † *Thomas Newton*, pretended to have had a Vision of the Virgin Mary, who said to him *Newton*, see thou do not take the Oath of *Allegiance*; and being of this publicly examined at the Commission-Table, and asked how he knew it to be the Virgin Mary which appeared? He answered, I know it was she, for she appeared unto me in the Form of her Assumption.

It was the Church of *England*, which in our late Troubles, principally fortified and entrenched the True Protestant Religion, against the Assaults of *Rome*.

This Church was still in being, though in Adversity. She had strong Vitals, and did not dye, notwithstanding there was some Distemper in her Estate. There was still a Constitution where Primitive Order and Decency might be found, and in which Men of Sobriety might be fixed. And great numbers of the Churchmen, by their constant Adherence to their Principles, under publick Contempt and

* See Mr. Cotton's *Lr. Exam. A.* 44. p. 4, 5. *Simplicit. defence A.* 1646. p. 22. *Min. of Prov. of Lond. Testim.* p. 18.

† *Geo's. Foot out of the Snare*, p. 58, 59. *A.* 1621.

and heavy Pressure, gained daily on the People, and convinced the World that they were not so Popish and Earthly minded, as popular Clamour had represented them. Also their learned Books and Conferences reduced some, and established many, and we owe a part of the Stability of Men in those Times, to God's Blessing on the Writings of Archbishop *Laud*, Mr. *Chillingworth*, Dr. *Bromhall*, Dr. *Cosins*, Dr. *Hammond*, and others.

Last of all, It is the Opinion of the Papists themselves, that their Cause is promoted by our Dissensions; and according to these Measures of Judgment they govern their Councils.

This was the Opinion of the Jesuite *Campanella*, in his Discourse touching the *Spanish Monarchy*, written about the Year 1600; and in 54 published at London in our Language: * *Concerning the weakening of the English* (says that Jesuite) *there can be no better way possibly be found out, than by causing Divisions and Dissentions among themselves.*—*And as for their Religion*—*it cannot be so easily extinguished and rooted out here, unless there were some certain Schools set up in Flanders,*—*by means of which there should be scattered abroad the seeds of Schism, &c.*

And whether these kinds of Seeds have not come from hence to us, as well as those better ones of the *Brabant Husbandry*, remaineth not now any longer a Question.

It was the Advice of the Jesuite *Contzens* †, *To make as much use of the Divisions of Enemies, as the Agreement of Friends.*

After this manner it is that they manage themselves; they endeavour to widen the Breach, in order to the introducing of Popery into a divided
S 3 Nation.

* *Campan. Disc. of Span. Mon. c. 25. p. 157.*

† *Contz. Polit. l. 2. Chap. 18. Sect. 9.*

Nation. They will have Hopes as long as we have Divisions. They will believe, whilst they see the Humours are in conflict, that the Body will be at last dissolved. If they will hope for Resettlement, as they declare they do, upon such inconsiderable Grounds, as the Printing of a *Monasticon* * or the *Provincial* † of *Lynwood* amongst us, though in the Quality of History rather than of Title or Law; what will they not expect from our Unchristian Distempers, and from our forbearing of Communion with the established Church, as if it were the Synagogue of Satan?

By this Artifice it is that they gain Profelytes, They expose the Protestants as a *dis-united* People. They demand of Injudicious Men, how they can in Prudence, joyn with those who are at Variance among themselves? Though at this time, in the Church of *England* it self, there is much more Agreement than in the Church of *Rome*, in which (say they) there are great Numbers of more private *Deists* ‡, and *Socinians*, and some (we are certain) who publish it to the World ** that the *Primacy* is *Antichristian*; in which there are Solemn and Publick Assemblies who declare openly against one another in the great point of the Papal Supremacy; and shew by so doing, that (in their Opinion) their common head cannot certainly tell the Nature of his Head-ship.

The Second part of the Second or more principal End of the Dissenters.

There remaineth to be considered, the *second more principal End*, the advancing Christian Religion, in these Kingdoms, to greater Purity and Perfection.

But

* Journal des Sçavans de l. Ann. 1665. p. 140.

† Journ. &c. de. l. Ann. 1666. p. 230, 233, &c.

‡ V. Polit. of France.

** Moyens Surs &c. Pour la conversion de tous les Heretiques.

But neither in this is their Expectation likely to be answered.

For First, *The means towards the settling of themselves, is the dissettlement of that which is well fixed.* And this is the way, not to a greater Purity in Religion, but to the Corruption of it.

For it removeth Charity which is the Spirit of the Christian Religion. It letteth loose great Numbers who cannot govern themselves; It moveth Men to live *Atheists* and *Idolaters*, to pour Contempt upon the Church of Christ; and confirmeth them in their Evil Course. It exposeth the Church as a Prey to the Common Enemy. Thus the Divisions in *Africa* gave Encouragement to the Arms of the barbarous Nations; and those in the *Ægyptian* Churches made way for the *Saracens*. And the Proposal of the maintenance of Charity and pure Religion by the overthrow of a tolerable Ecclesiastical Constitution, is as improbable a project as that of *Flammack*, who in *Henry the Seventh's* time*, proposed a Rebellion without a breach of the Peace.

And it is here to be considered, that those who dissent from a National Church, do generally make use of such Junctures, as are apter to debase than refine Religion. They often move for Alterations in the Church when there is a great Heat and Ferment in the State: And in such Seasons, the Form of a Church may be pulled in sunder, but there is not Temper enough and Coolness of unbyas'd Consideration to set it together to Advantage. Such times as are the Junctures of State Dissenters, and amongst them Revolutions generally begin, though without the pretence of Reforming Religion, they are not carried on amongst the People. For it will not serve their purpose to say plainly, they are against the

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* L. Bac. H. 7. p. 164.

Government, because the Government is against their Interests. Now when well-meaning Dissenters are in the hands of such worldly Power, they will not be able to establish what they think is surest, but that which pleaseth their secular Leaders. A Change in the Church naturally produceth some Change in the State; and in such Changes who can secure the Event for the better? The Words of Bishop *Andrews* *, about the midst of the Reign of K. *James*, toucht this point, and they doubtless are worth our Observation, *When* (saith he) *they have made the State present nought, no Remedy; We must have a better for it, and so a change needs; What change? Why Religion, or the Church Government, or somewhat (they know not what well) stand a while, ye shall change your Religion* (said they of this day [the Gun-Powder Traytors]) *and have one for it wherein, to your comfort, you shall not understand a word (not you of the People) what you either sing or pray, and for variety, you shall change a whole Communion for an half. Now a blessed exchange, were it not? What say some others? You shall change for a fine new Church-Government; a Presbytery would do this better for you than an Hierarchy, and (perhaps) not long after, a Government of States, than a Monarchy. Meddle not with these Changers.*

Now when a State is either disturbed or dissolved, Men cannot foresee all the ill Consequences of it. When the Vessel is stirred, the Lees come up, which lay before undiscerned in the Mass of the Liquor; and so it is in Religion; it is not fined, but rather rendered less pure, by Motions in the Body, Spiritual or Civil. Then Politicians use Conscientious Instruments no further than they serve a present purpose, and for new Purposes they find new Instruments. One of the Assembly of Divines † discoursed on this Manner at a Publick Fast; *Have not these*
Trumpets

* Ser. 6. on. Nov. 5. 1614.

† D. J. L. on *Psal.* 4. 4. Feb. 24. A. 1647.

Trumpets and these poor Pitchers had their share, and a good share too, in bringing down the Walls of Jericho, and the Camp of Median? And have not they (like the Story in Ezekiel) if I may so express it, Prophesied you up an Army? The witness of these things is in the whole Kingdom, and a Witness of them is in your own Bosoms. Yet the Preacher was very sensible at the same time, that those whom they had helped to Power, were turning it against them, and breaking them to pieces by dashing *Independency* against them. Aspiring Men make fair Promises, till they have gained their point; but when that is once secured, they take other Measures. They say, * that *Maximilian*, for the gaining of Votes in order to the Empire, used secret *Preachings* to please the *Protestant Princes* [the *Electors* *Palatine*, the *Dukes* of *Saxony*, and *Brandenburg*]; and went openly to Mass to please the *Popish Bishops* of *Mentz*, *Trier*, and *Cologne*. Also the claims of the *Worldly Encrease* with their Power: And (for illustration sake) when the House being garbelled, had much less *Right*, but more *Force*, (the Army as yet agreeing with them, and the good King being in their hands) then they gave to the *Declarations* of their Pleasure the Title. Not as before of *Ordinances*, but of *Acts* of *Parliament* †.

Oliver likewise declared plainly, || *That there was as much need to keep the Cause by power as to get it.* And being potent, he entred the House, and mocked at his Masters, and commanded, with insolent disdain, that *That Bawble* ** (meaning the Mace of the Speaker) should be taken away. Men may intend well, but using the help of the illegal secular Arm, they can never secure what they propose, but frequently render that which was well settled much worse by their unhinging of it.

By

* *Melvil's Mem* p. 33.

† *Whitl. Memoirs* p. 363.

|| Speech at the Dissol. of the House, Jan. 22. 1654 p. 22.

** *Id* *ibid.* p. 529.

By such means it comes to pass, that the Civil State is embroiled, and Religion sensibly decays, instead of growing towards Perfection, where publick Order is interrupted, and Men gain a Liberty which they know not how to use.

Secondly, It appeareth, by the *History of our late Revolutions*, which began with pretence of a more pure Religion, that our Dissentions occasioned great Corruptions both in Faith and Manners.

Then the War was Preach'd up as the Christian Cause. And one of the City-Soldiers, mortally wounded at *Newberry-fight*, was applauded (in an Epistle* to the Houses) as one whose Voice was more than human, when he cried out, *O that I had another another Life to Lose for Jesus Christ*. Then this Doctrine (so very immoral and unchristian) was by some † preached, and by great Numbers embraced. The Lord hath no more to lay to the charge of an Elect person, yet in the height of Iniquity, and the excess of Riot, and committing all the Abominations that can be committed — than he hath to lay to the charge of a Saint triumphant in Glory. Then certain Souldiers || enter'd a Church with five Lights, as Emblems of five things thought fit to be extinguished, viz. The Lord's day, Tythes, Ministers, Magistrates, the Bible. Then by a publick Intelligencer, who called himself *Mercurius Britannicus***, the Lord Primate *Usher* himself was reproached as an Old doting Apostating Bishop. Instances are endless; but, what need have we of further Witnesses than the Lords and Commons, and the Ministers of the Province of London, whose Complaints and Acknowledgments are hereby subjoyned.

The

* Hill's Ser. called Temple work, A. 1644.

† D. Crisp, in Ser. called, *Our sins are already laid on Chr.* P. 274, 275.

|| H. of Indep part. 2. p. 152, 153.

** Merc. Brit. N. 13. Nov. A. 43. p. 97.

The Lords and Commons, in one of their Ordinances * use these Words: *We — have thought fit (least we partake in other Mens sins and thereby be in danger to receive of their Plagues) to set forth this our deep sense of the great dishonour of God, and perillous Condition that this Kingdom is in, through the abominable Blasphemies and damnable Heresies vented and spread abroad therein, tending to the Subversion of the Faith, Contempt of the Ministry and Ordinance of Jesus Christ.*

The Ministers made a like acknowledgments, saying, *Instead † of extirpating Heresie, Schism, Prophaneness; we have such an impudent and general inundation of all these Evils, that multitudes are not ashamed to press and plead for publick, formal, and universal Toleration.*

And again, *We the Ministers of Jesus Christ, do hereby testify to all our Flocks, to all the Kingdom, and to all the Reformed Churches, as our great dislike of Prelacy, Erastianism, Brownism, and Independency; so our utter abhorrence of Anti-Scripturism, Popery, Arrianism, Socinianism, Arminianism, Antinomianism, Anabaptism, Libertinism, and Familism; with all such like, now too rise among us.*

Thirdly, Some Dissenters, by the Purity of Religion, mean Agreeableness of Doctrine, Discipline, and Life, to the dispensation of the New Testament, and a removal of human Inventions: And thus far the Notion is true; but, with reference to our Church, it is an unwarrantable Reflection; for it hath been one Principal Rule, and that is the Holy Scripture, and Subordinate Rules in pursuance of the general Canons, in Holy Writ, are not to be called in our Church, any more than in the pure and primitive Christian Church, whose Pattern it follows,

* Die Joviz. Feb. 4. 1646.

† Testim. to Truth of J. Chr. p. 31.

lows, human Imaginations, but Rules of Ecclesiastical Wisdom and Discretion.

But there are other among the Dissenters, who by the Purity of Religion, mean a Simplicity as opposed to Composition, and not to such mixtures as corrupt the Circumstances or Parts of Worship which in themselves are Pure. Quakers, and some others, believe their way the Purer, because they have taken out of it Sacraments and External Forms of Worship, and endeavour'd (as they phrase* it) *to bring the Peoples minds out of all Visibles*. By equal Reason the Papists may say their Eucharist is more pure than that of the Protestants, because they have taken the Cup from it. But that which maketh a pure Church, is like that which maketh a pure Medicine; not the fewness of the Ingredients, but the good Quality of them, how many soever they be; and the aptness of their Nature for the procuring of Health.

Men who have this false *Notion* of the Purity of Religion, distil it till it Evaporates; and all that is left is a dead and corrupt Sediment. And here I have judg'd the following Words of Sir *Walter Raleigh*, not unfit to be by me transcribed, and considered by all. † *The Reverend Care which Moses had in all that belonged even to the outward and least parts of the Tabernacle, Ark, and Sanctuary——is now so forgotten and cast away in this Superfine Age, by those of the Family, by the Anabaptists, Brownists, and other Sectaries, as all Cost and Care bestowed and had of the Church, wherein God is to be served and worshipped, is accounted a kind of Popery, and as proceeding from an Idolatrous Disposition: Insomuch, as time would soon bring to pass, (if it were not resisted) that God would be turned out of Churches into Barns, and from thence again into the Fields and*

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* *G. Fox*. in *J. Perrot's* Hidden things brought to light, p. 11

† *Hist. of the World*, lib. 2. part. 1. c. 5. p. 249.

Mountains, and under the Hedges ; and the Officers of the Ministry (robbed of all Dignity and Respect) be as contemptible as these places ; all Order, Discipline, and Church Government, left to newness of Opinion, and Men's Fancies : yea, and soon after, as many kinds of Religions would spring up as there are Parish Churches within England ; every contentious and ignorant Person clothed his Fancy with the Spirit of God, and his Imaginations with the Gift of Revelation ; insomuch, as when the Truth, which is but one, shall appear to the simple multitude, no less variable than contrary to it self, the Faith of Men will soon after dye away by degrees, and all Religion be held in Scorn and Contempt.

Fourthly, If several contrary Parties be established by way of Sufferance ; no progress is likely to be made towards the perfecting of Religion : For the suffering of divers Errors is not the way to the Re-forming of them. One Principle only can be true, and the blending of such as are contrary with it, createth the greatest of Impurities, a mixture of that which is Prophane with that which is Sacred.

Fifthly, Many Dissenters are not likely to erect a Model by which Christianity may be improved amongst us, because they lay aside Rules of Discretion, and relye not on God's Assistance in the use of good Means, but depend wholly upon immediate Illumination, without the Aids of Prudence ; and some of the more sober amongst them, have enclin'd too much towards this Extream.

In Reformation (said one * in his Sermon before the Commons) do not make Reason your Rule nor Line you go by. It is the Line of all the Papists. — The second Covenant

* Mr. S. Sympson in A. 1643. Reform. Preservat. p. 126, 127.

Covenant doth forbid, not only Reason, but all Divine Reason that is not contained by Institution in the Worship of God.——Gods Worship hath no ground in any Reason, but God's Will.

Sixthly, There are already provided in this Church, more probable Means for the promoting of pure Religion, than those which have been proposed by all, or any of the Dissenting Party. It is true, each Church is capable of Improvement, by the change of obsolete Words, Phrases, and Customs; by the addition of Forms upon new Occasions; by adjusting discreetly some Circumstantials of External Order. But to change the present Model for any other that has yet been offered to Publick Consideration, is to make a very injudicious bargain. There are in it all the Necessaries to Faith and Godliness; there is preserved Primitive Discipline, Decency, and Order: And under the Means of it, there are great Numbers grown up into such an Improvement of Judicious Knowledge and Useful, Prudent, Serious Piety; that it requireth a laborious Scrutiny to find Parallels to them in any Nations under the Heavens.

I do not take Pleasure in distastful Comparisons: Yet I ought not (sure) to pass by this unthankful Negligence, that excellent Spirit which God hath raised up among the Writers and Preachers of this Church; their Labours being so instrumental towards the right Information of the Judgment, and the amendment of Lives of the unprejudiced Hearers.

It must be confessed, that there is some trifling on all sides: And it will be so whilst Men are Men. But there is now (blessed be God) as little of it in the Church of *England* as in any Age. And the very few who do it, appear plainly to be what they are, Phantasticks and Actors, rather than Preachers. But amongst the Parties, the Folly and Weakness puts on a more venerable Pretence, and they give vent to it with

with studied shews of mighty Seriousness, and deliver it solemnly as the immediate Dictate of God's Holy Spirit. And I cannot but call to mind one Minister in this Church, who would (for instance sake) have deliberately used these Words of Mr. *Rutherford*, in a solemn Audience *, and after this manner: *God permits sins, and such solemn sins, that there may be room in the Play for pardoning Grace.*

It seemeth also not unfit for me to take notice, that the Changes formerly made in Church Matters in *England* by Dissenters, were not so conducive in their Nature, to the edifying of the Body of Christ, as the things illegally removed. The Doctrine of God's secret Decrees taught in their *Catechisms*, was a stronger and more improper kind of Meat than that with which the Church of *England* had fed her Children. Ordination by a Bishop accompanied with Presbyters, was more Certain and Satisfactory than that by Presbyters without a Bishop.

There was not that Sobriety in many of the present and *unstudied* Effusions, which appeared in every of those Publick Forms which were considered and fix'd. And it sounded more decently (for example sake) to pray in the Church's Words, and say, from *Fornication good Lord deliver us*, than to use those of an eminent Dissenter †, *Lord unlust us*. Nor did the long continued Prayers help Men so much against Distraction as those shorter ones, with Breaks and Pauses in the Liturgy, and the great and continued Length of them introduced, by consent, sitting at Prayer |||.

Neither did it tend less to Edification, to repeat the Creed standing, than to leave it quite out of the Directory for publick Worship. Neither was it an advantage to Christian Piety, to change the gesture of Kneeling

* *Ruth.* on *Dan.* 6. 26. p. 8 A. 1643. before the Commons.

† Prayers at the End of Farewel Sermons.

||| Mr. U's Prayer before Sermon, p. 31.

ing in the *Eucharist* when the Sacred Elements were given together with Prayer, for that less reverend one of Sitting : Of sitting especially with the Hat on, as the most uncomely Practice of some was ; the People being taught to cover the Head *, whilst the Minister was to remain bare amongst them. Nor was the Civil Pledge of the *Ring in Marriage* bettered by the invention of some Pastors, who (as is storied of them) took a Ring † of some Women-Converts, upon their admittance into their Church.

Neither was the Alteration of the Form of giving the Holy Elements an amendment. For the Minister was directed to the use of these Words || : *Take ye, Eat ye ; this is the Body of Christ which is broken for you——This Cup is the new Testament in the Blood of Christ which is shed for the remission of the sins of many.*

——The Words denoting Christ's present Crucifix, and (either actually or in the future Certainty of it) give Countenance to the Romish Sacrifice of the Mass ; though I verily believe they were not so intended.

Nor did the forbidding the Observation of Christ's Nativity and other Holy-days, add one Hair's breadth to the Piety of the Nation ; but on the other hand, it took away, at least from the common People, one ready means of fixing in their Memories the most useful History of the Christian Religion.

It is easie enough, even for Men who were Dwarfs in the Politicks, in such sort to alter a Constitution as to make it more pleasing for a time to themselves during their Passion, and the Novelty of the Model in their Fancy not yet disturbed by some unforeseen Mischief or Inconveniency ; but 'tis
extream

* *Edward's Gangrena* part. 1. Error 112. p. 25.

† See *Edw. Gan.* part. 2. p. 13.

|| *Directory for Publick Worship*, p. 27.

extream difficult upon the whole Matter, to make a true and lasting Improvement, there being so many parts in the Frame to be mutually fitted, and such variety of Cases in Human Affairs.

I pray from my Heart for the bettering, but I dread the tinkering of Government.

The CONCLUSION.

IF then Dissenters are not likely to obtain their Ends of Establishing themselves, of rooting out of Popery, and promoting pure Religion, by overthrowing the Church of *England*; the Inference is natural, they ought, both in Prudence and Christianity, to endeavour after Union with it.

They will (it may be) say to me, Can Men be perswaded two contrary Ways? Can they both Assent and Dissent? And whilst they secretly Dissent, would you force them into an Hypocritical Compliance: I Answer thus:

First, Though a Man cannot at the same time wholly Assent and Dissent, yet there are Means for the rectifying a false Perswasion; and he may, upon good Grounds, change his Mind.

Secondly, No Man's Mind can be forced; for it is beyond the reach of Human Power.

Thirdly, Good Governours do not use Severity, to force Men to dissemble their Minds, and to make them Hypocrites, but to move them, after a trial of fair Means, to greater Consideration.

I am not concerned in the Emblem of the *Persian* * *Dervoi*, who whilst they go about their Office of Teaching the Law to the People, carry a great Club in their Hands. But neither do I think that the best way to remove pernicious Error from Men, is never to give them any Disturbance in it.

I have two things only to recommend, first to the Consideration, and then to the Practice of such as Dissent.

First, This is a Time of Prosecution; and a Time of Adversity is a proper Time for Consideration, and Consideration is a Means to make us hold fast to that which is Good, and reject that which is Evil. I beseech you, make such Advantage of this Juncture. Sit down, and think once more of the Nature of this Church. Confer with the Guides of the National Religion; read, without Prejudice the Books commended by them to you. Peruse seriously the Books which Authority hath set forth. Some who have spoken against them, have by their own Confession never read them. Examine and Judge. Many of your Scruples have arisen from what you have heard and read; they would not have otherwise been ingendred in your Minds. Hear and read for your Information, as well as your Entanglement.

Secondly, Do as much as you can do. Do as much as the Dissenters, who are most eminent for Learning, Piety, Preaching, Writing, Experience and Fame, sometimes actually do. They have owned our Communion to be lawful †. They have received

* *Tavern. Pers. Trav. l. 4. c. 6. p. 155. 156.*

† See *Laws. of hearing the publick Ministry, &c.* by Mr. *Nyc.* Mr. *Robinson, &c.* and Mr. *Corbet's* Nonconformists Plea for Lay-Communion.

received the Communion kneeling. They have bred up Children to the Ministry of this Church. They have joyned in the Liturgy. They have been Married according to the Form of it. Nay, one who assisted in making of the Directory, would have his own Daughter (in those Times) be married in the way of the Book of Common-Prayer *. Do as the ancient Nonconformists did, who would not Separate, though they feared to Subscribe; who wrote with such Zeal against those of the Separation, That Mr. Hildergham was called, *The † Maul of the Brownists*.

Do more for the Peace of God's Church, than for a Vote or Office, or Fear of Legal Penalty. Come as Christians to the Sacrament, and not as Politicians. Those who have so done, yet break the Unity of the Church, are said to use the Arts of *Jesuits*, and to be without all excuse, by a Dissenter || who writes with commendable Temper.

Do constantly what you do upon Occasion. No Preaching or Praying, which is better liked, can ballance the Evil of Separation from a Church, which imposeth no Terms of Communion which are sinful.

For Peace sake, let that be more constant, in which your Conscience alloweth Occasional Exercise. A Member who joyns himself to any established Church, and also to any Churches which are set up, not as legal Supplements of it, but as Forts against it, seems to be a kind of Wooden Leg, if I may represent so grave a Matter by so light a Simi-

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litude;

* Mr. Marshal in Hist. of Indep. Par. 1. p. 80.

† See Dr. Willis's Epistle Dedicatory, before his Harm. on Sam. Schismaticorum (*Qui vulgò Brownistæ*) malleum.

|| Fox. Calm. Sect. 6. p. 49, 50, &c.

tude; he is tyed on, and taken off at Pleasure; he is not, as by natural Ligaments and Nerves, knit to such Ecclesiastical Bodies. If all would do constantly what they can in Conscience do sometimes, they would create a better Opinion of themselves in the Governours, and move them to all due Favour, and hinder all the destructive Breaches amongst us. For the Remain of other Dissenters would be so inconsiderable, as to abide in the Body of the Nation, as ill Humours thrown off the extream Parts, from which there may arise some little Pain, but no mortal Danger.

Now the God of Peace grant Peace to us always, by all fit Means.

A Serious

A Serious
EXHORTATION,

With some Important

ADVICES,

Relating to the

Late Cases about Conformity,

Recommended to the present *Dissenters*
 from the Church of *England*.

THE offering Friendly Advice and Counsel, especially in great and important Cases, is, though often a thankless, yet a very charitable Office; a thing agreeable to the best Inclinations of Human Nature, and highly conducive to the Necessities of Men, and consequently needs no Apology to introduce it. We live, 'tis true, in an ill-natur'd and censorious Age, wherein 'tis rare to find any one, who will not take with the Left-hand, what's offered to them with the Right. But I am not discouraged from this Attempt by the Peevishness and Frowardness of many that differ from us, remembring that all honest Undertakings (and such I am sure this is) are

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under the more peculiar Conduct and Blessing of the Divine Providence, which can and will succeed and prosper them to an happy Issue, if Mens own Obstinacy and Perversness do not put a Bar in the way to hinder it. I do therefore beseech our *Dissenting Brethren*, with all the Earnestness that becomes a Matter of so much Importance, and with all the Kindness and Tenderness that becomes a Christian, that they would *suffer the Word of Exhortation*, and duly weigh and consider the Requests and Advices that are here plainly laid before them, which I hope will be found such as carry their own Light and Evidence along with them.

I.

And first, *We beg of them to believe, That they may be mistaken about those Matters which are alledged as the Causes of their Separation.* This, one would think, were as needless, as 'tis a modest and reasonable Request. For did ever any Man (the Bishop of Rome excepted) lay claim to Infallibility? Do not the woful Infirmities of Human Nature, the weakness and short-sightedness of our Understandings, the daily Experience of our selves, and the lamentable Failures we observe in others, sufficiently convince us, how prone we are to Error and Mistake? But though this be granted and owned on all hands, yet in Practice we frequently find Men acting by other Measures. For, how many are there, that in the most controverted Cases bear up themselves with as much Confidence and Assurance, censure others with as magisterial a Boldness, condemn the things enjoined by our Church with as positive and peremptory a Determination, as if they were infallibly sure that they are in the Right, and all others in the Wrong that differ from them. The early Prepossession of a contrary Opinion, the powerful Prejudices of Education, an implicate and unexamined Belief

Belief of what their Guides and Leaders teach them, have a strange Force upon the Minds of Men, so that in effect, they no more doubt of the Truth and Goodness of the Cause they are engaged in, then they question the Articles of their Creed. Wherefore, I do once and again intreat them, that laying aside all Pride, Partiality, and Self-conceit, they would not think more highly of themselves, and of their own Way, than they ought to think; especially remembering, that the Matters contended about are confessedly disputable, and that they cannot be ignorant, that the Case seems otherwise to others, who may at least be allowed to be as wise Men, and as competent Judges as themselves. Truth makes the easiest entrance into modest and humble Minds; *The Meek will be guide in Judgment, the Meek will be teach his Way*; the Spirit of God never rests upon a Proud Man.

II.

Secondly, *We beg of them, that they would seriously and impartially weigh and consider, as well what is said on the one side, as on the other.* This is a piece of Justice that every one owes to Truth, and which indeed every Man owes to himself, that is not willing to be deceived. To take up with Prejudices, which Education and long Custom have instilled into him, or wherein any other Arts or Methods have engaged him, without strictly enquiring whether those Prejudices stand upon a firm Foundation, is to see only on one side; to bind up ones self in the Judgment or Opinion of any Man, that is not divinely Inspired and Infallible, or pertinaciously to adhere to any Party of Men, how plausible and specious soever they may seem to be, without examining their Grounds; and endeavouring to know what is said against them, is to choose a Perswasion at a Peradventure; and 'tis great odds whether such a one be in the right. In all Enquiries after Truth;

we ought to keep an Ear open for one side of the Controversie, as well as the other, and not to think we have done enough, till without Favour or Prejudice, and to the best of our Understandings, we have heard, tryed, and judged the Reasons brought as well for as against it. And till this be done, I see not with what pretence of Reason Men can talk so much of their Scruples, or plead for Favour on the account of their Dissatisfactions. Consciences truly tender, are willing and desirous to embrace all Opportunities of Resolution, and are ready to kiss the Hand that would bring them better Information, and are not wont to neglect, much less thrust from them, the Means that might ease them of their Doubts and Scruples. We justly blame it in them of the Church of *Rome*, that in a manner they resign up their Understandings to their Guides and Confessors, and are not suffered to be truly acquainted with the Protestant Principles, and the Grounds and Reasons of the Reformation; not to read any of the Books that are written for their Conviction, without a special and peculiar Licence. Whether our Brethren of the Separation be under any such Spiritual Discipline, I know not; sure I am, it looks very odly, that so many of them are no more concerned to understand the true State of the Church of *England*, and the Nature and Reasons of her Constitutions, that so few of them care to confer with those that are able to instruct them, but cry out, they are satisfied already; nay, some of them, to my knowledge, when desired to propose their Scruples, in order to the giving them Satisfaction, have plainly and absolutely refused to do it. Little Reason there is to believe, that such Persons have ever Read and Examined what the Church of *England* has to say for her self. Are there not many, that not only scruple, but rail at the Book of *Common-Prayer*, that yet never heard it, nor, perhaps, ever read it

in all their Lives? And if this be not to speak Evil of what we know not, I cannot tell what is. How many incomparable Books have been heretofore written in defence of our Church, her Rites and Usages, that yet generally lye by the Walls, little known and less read, by those that so much cry out against her. And at this Time, how many excellent Discourses have been published, for the Satisfaction of Dissenters, written with the greatest Temper and Moderation, with the utmost Plainness and Perspicuity, with all imaginable Evidence and strength of Reasoning; so short, as not to require any considerable Portion, either of Time or Cost; so suited to present Circumstances, as to obviate every material Objection that is made against Communion with us; and yet there is just Cause to fear, that the far greatest Part of our *Dissenters* are meer Strangers to them, and are not so just to themselves, or us, as to give them the Reading: And that those few that do look into them, do it rather out of a design to pick Quarrels against them, and to expose them in scurrilous or cavilling Pamphlets, than to receive Satisfaction by them. I do heartily and from my Soul wish an End of these Contentions, and that there were no further occasion for them; but if our Dissenting Brethren will still proceed in this way, we desire, (and hope 'tis but what is reasonable) that the things in Difference may be debated in the most quiet, peaceable, and amicable Manner; that they may be gravely and substantially managed, and only the Merits of the Cause attended to, and that the Controversie may not be turned off to mean and trifling Persons, whose highest Attainment perhaps it is, to write an idle and senseless Pamphlet, and which can serve no other use, but only that the People may be born in hand, that such and such Books are answered. Which is: so unmanly and disingenious a way, and so like the shifting

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ing Artifices of them of the Church of Rome, that I am apt to perswade my self; the wiser Heads of the Dissenting Party cannot but be ashamed of it. If they be not, 'tis plain to all the World, they are willing to serve an ill Design by the most unwarrantable Means. But however that be, we think we have great Reason to expect from them, that they should hear our Church before they condemn Her, and consider what has been said for the removing of their Doubts, before they tell us any more of Scruples, Tender Consciences, and the Hard Measure that they meet withal. I confess, could I meet with a Person that had brought himself to some kind of Unbias'dness and Indifferency of Temper, and that designed nothing more than to seek and find the right way of serving God, without respect to the Intrigues and Interest of this or that particular Party; and in order thereunto, had, with a sincere and honest Mind, read whatever might probably conduce to his Satisfaction, fairly proposed his Scruples, and modestly consulted with those who were most proper to advise him, and humbly begged the Guidance and Direction of the Divine Grace and Blessing, and yet after all, should still labour under his old Dissatisfactions; I should heartily pity and pray for such a Man, and think myself obliged to improve all my Interest for Favour and Forbearance towards him. But such Persons as these, I am afraid, are but thin sowed; and, without Breach of Charity, it may be supposed, there is not one of a Thousand.

III.

Thirdly, *We desire, that before they go on to accuse our Church with driving them into Separation, they would directly charge her with imposing sinful Terms of Communion.* And unless they do this, and when they have done it, make it good, (for barely to accuse, I hope, is not sufficient), I see not which way they can possibly

sibly justify their Separation from us. 'Tis upon this account the whole Protestant Reformation defends their Departure from the Church of *Rome*. They found the Doctrine of that Church infinitely corrupt in several of the main Principles of Religion; New Articles of Faith introduced, and bound upon the Consciences of Men under pain of Damnation; its Worship overgrown with very gross Idolatry and Superstition; its Rites and Ceremonies not only over-numerous, but many of them advanced into proper and direct Acts of Worship, and the use of them made necessary to Salvation; and besides, its Members required to joyn and communicate in these Corruptions and Depravations, nay, and all Proposals and Attempts towards a Reformation obstinately rejected and thrown out; in which Case, they did with great Reason and Justice depart from her, which we may be confident they would not have done, had no more been required of them, than instead of worshipping Images, to use the Sign of the Cross in Baptism, or instead of the Adoration of the Host, to kneel at the Receiving of the Sacrament. A Learned Protestant Divine, of great Name and Note, has expressly told us; *That had there been no other Faults in the Church of Rome, besides their useless Ceremonies in Baptism, and some other things that are beyond the Measure and Genius of the Christian Religion, they had still continued in the Communion of that Church**. Indeed did the Church of *England* command any thing which Christ prohibited, or prohibit any thing which Christ has commanded, then come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, were good warrant and authority. But where do we meet with these Prohibitions? Not in the Word of God, not in the Nature and Reason of the things them-

* Amyrald. de Secess. ab Eccles. Rom. p. 233.

themselves; nor indeed do we find our Dissenting Brethren of late very forward to fasten this Charge, and much less to prove it; whatever unwary Sayings may fall from any of them in the Heat and Warmth of Disputation, or be suggested by indirect Consequences and artificial Insinuations. And if our Church commands nothing that renders her Communion sinful, then certainly Separation from her must be unlawful, because the Peace and Unity of the Church, and Obedience to the Commands of lawful Authority, are express and indispensable Duties; and a few private Suspicions of the Unlawfulness of the thing are not sufficient to sway against plain, publick, and necessary Duties: Nor can it be safe to reject Communicating with those, with whom Christ himself does not refuse Communion. This I am sure was once thought good Doctrine by the chiefest of our Dissenters, who when time was, reasoned thus against those that subdivided from them:

** If we be a Church of Christ, and Christ hold Communion with us, why do you separate from us? If we be the Body of Christ, do not they that separate from the Body, separate from the Head also? We are loth to speak any thing that may offend you, yet we entreat you to consider, that if the Apostle call those Divisions of the Church of Corinth (wherein Christians did not separate into divers formed Congregations in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper) Schisms, (1 Cor. 10. 10) may not your Succession from us, and professing you cannot joyn with us as Members, and setting up Congregations of another Communion, be more properly called Schism?—You gather Churches out of your Churches, and set up Churches in an opposite way to our Churches, and all this you do voluntarily and unwarrantably, not having any sufficient Cause for it.*

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* A Vindication of the Presbyterian Government, 1649.
p. 130.

And in the same Book they tell us of two-fold Schism, Negative and Positive: *Negative*, when Men do peaceably and quietly withdraw from Communion with a Church, not making a Head against that Church from which they are departed: The other is, when Persons so withdrawing do consociate and withdraw themselves into a distinct and opposite Body, setting up a Church against a Church, which (say they) Camero calls a Schism by way of Eminency; and further tells us, There are four Causes that make a Separation from a Church lawful:

1. When they that separate are grievously and intollerably persecuted. 2. When the Church they separate from is Heretical. 3. When it is Idolatrous. 4. When it is the Seat of Antichrist. And where none of these four are found, there the Separation is insufficient and Schism. Now we are fully assured, that none of these four Causes can be justly charged upon our Congregations; therefore you must not be displeased with us, but with your selves, if we blame you as guilty of positive Schism. All which is true now, as it was then, and as applicable to us and them, as it was to them and their Dissenters.

Admit then, there were some things in our Constitution that might be contrived to better Purposes, and that needed Amendment and Alteration; yet I hope every Defect, or supposed Corruption in a Church, is not a sufficient ground for Separation, or warrant enough to rend and tear the Church in pieces. Let Mr. Calvin judge between us and this Matter, who says, * That where-ever the Word of God is duly preached, and reverently attended to, and the true Use of the Sacraments kept up, there is the plain Appearance of a true Church, whose Authority no Man may safely despise, or reject its Admonitions, or resist its Counsels, or set at nought its Discipline, much less separate from it, and violate its Unity; for that our Lord has so great Regard to the

* Institut. lib. 4. Sect. 10, 11, 12. fol. 349.

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the Communion of his Church, that he accounts him an Apostate from his Religion, who obstinately separates from any Christian Society, which keeps up the true Ministry of the Word and Sacraments : That such a Separation is a Denial of God and Christ, and that it is a dangerous and pernicious Temptation, so much as to think of separating from such a Church, the Communion whereof is never to be rejected, so long as it continues in the true use of the Word and Sacraments, though otherwise it be overrun with many Blemishes and Corruptions. Which is as plain and full a Determination of the Case, as if he had particularly designed it against the Doctrine and Practice of the Modern Dissenters from our Church.

IV.

Fourthly, We entreat them to consider, Whether it be pure Conscience, and meer Zeal for the Honour of Religion, and not very often Discontent, or Trade and Interest, that has the main stroke in keeping them from Communion with our Church. Far be it from me to judge the Secrets of Mens Hearts, or to fasten such a Charge on the whole Body of Dissenters, yea, I accuse not any particular Person; but only to desire they would lay their Hands upon their Hearts, and deal impartially with themselves, and say, whether they stand clear before God in this Matter. And there is the more Reason to put Men upon this Enquiry, not only because Secular Ends are very apt to mix with, and shelter themselves under the shadow of Religion; but because this has been an old Artifice, made use of to promote Separation. Thus the Donatists in the Primitive Times upheld their Separation from the Catholick Church, and kept their Party fast together, by Trading only within themselves, by Employing none to Till their Grounds, or be their Stewards, but those that would be of their Side; nay, and sometimes hiring Persons by large Sums of

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Money to be Baptized into their Party, as *Crispin* did the People of *Mappalia**. And how evident the same Policy is among our modern *Quakers*, is too notorious to need either Proof or Observation. Time was, when it was made an Argument to prove *Independency* to be a Faction†, and not matter of Conscience, because needy, broken decay'd Men, who knew not how to live, and hoped to get something, turned *Independents*, and became Sticklers for it; that some who had *Businesses*, *Causes*, and *Matters* depending, struck in with them, and pleaded for them, that so they might find Friends, be sooner dispatch'd, and fare better in their *Causes*; that *Ambitious*, *Proud*, *Covetous* Men, who had a mind to *Offices*, *Places* of Profit about the *Army*, *Excise*, &c. turned about to the *Independents*, and were great Zealots for them. Thus it was then, and whether the same Leaven do not still spread and ferment, and perhaps as much as ever, there is just Cause to suspect. Whoever looks into the Trading part of this City, and indeed of the whole Nation, must needs be a very heedless and indiligent Observer, if he do not take notice how *Interests* are formed, and by what *Methods* *Parties* and *Factions* are kept up; how many *Thousands* of the poorer sort of *Dissenters* depend on this or that Man for their *Work*, and consequently for their *Livelihood* and *Subsistence*; how many depend upon others for their *Trade* and *Custom*, whom accordingly these Men can readily command, and do produce to give *Votes*, and increase *Parties* upon all *Publick* *Occasions*; and what little *Encouragement* any Man finds from them, that once deserts them, and comes over to the Church of *England*. There is another thing that

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* *Vid. Aug. Ep. 73. (ad Crisp.)*

† *Edwards's Further Discovery, p. 185.*

contributes not a little to this Jealousie and Suspicion, that many of the chiefeft and most stiff and zealous of the *Dissenting* Party, are they, at least the immediate Descendants of those, who in the late evil Times, by Rapine and Violence shared among themselves the Revenues of the Church, and the Patrimony of the Crown, and are said still privately to keep on foot their Titles to them. And if so, what wonder if such Men look on themselves as obliged in point of Interest to widen Breaches, foment Differences, increase Factions; and all this to subvert and overturn the Church of *England*; being well assured they can never hope, but over the Ruins of this Church, to make way to their once sweet Possessions? Let Men therefore impartially examine themselves, and search, whether a worldly Spirit be not at the bottom of their Zeal and Stiffness. These I confess are Designs too base and sordid to be owned above board: But *be not deceived, God is not mocked; Man looks to the outward Appearance, but God looks to the Heart.*

V.

Fifthly, *We desire them to consider, Whether it be not a just Prejudice to their Cause, and that which ought to prevail with Men modest and peaceable, that in those things, wherein they differ from us, they are condemned by the Practice of the whole Catholick Church for fifteen hundred years together.* This, were I minded, might afford a large Field for Discourse, but I shall instance only, and that very briefly, in a few Particulars.

And first, We desire them to produce any settled part of the Christian Church, that ever was without Episcopal Government, till the Time of *Calvin*: it being then as hard to find any part of the Christian World without a Church, as to find a Church without a Bishop. This is so evident in the most early Antiquities of the Church, that I believe our

Dissenters

Dissenters begin to grow sick of the Controversie. And if *Blundell*, *Salmasius* and *Daille*, (whose great Parts, Learning, and indefatigable Industry could, if any thing, have made out the contrary) have been forced to grant, That *Episcopacy* obtain'd in the Church within a few Years after the *Apostolick* Age; we are sure we can carry it higher, even up to the Apostles themselves. There are but two Passages, that I know of, in all Antiquity, of any note, and both of them not till the latter end of the *Fourth Century*, that may seem to question *Episcopal* Authority: The one, that famous and well-known Passage of * *St. Jerom*, which yet when improved to the utmost that it is capable of, only intimates *Episcopacy* not to be of *Apostolical* Institution. And very clear it is to those that are acquainted with *St. Jerom's* Writings, that he often wrote in haste, and did not always weigh things at the Beam, and forgot at one time what he had said at another; that many Expressions fell from him in the heat of Disputation, according to the Warmth and the Eagerness of his Temper, and that he was particularly chafed into this Assertion by the fierce Opposition of the *Deacons* at *Rome*, who began to Usurp upon, and over-top the *Presbyters*, which tempted him to magnifie and extol their Place and Dignity, as anciently equal to the *Episcopal* Office, and as containing in it the common Rights and Priviledges of Priesthood. For at other times, when he wrote with cooler Thoughts about him, he does plainly and frequently enough assert the Authority of Bishops over *Presbyters*, and did himself constantly live in Communion with, and Subjection to Bishops. The other Passage is that of *Aerius*, who held indeed that a Bishop and a

Vol. III. U Presbyter

* *Idem Presbyter qui Episcopus, & antequam d'aboli instinctu Judia in religione fierent, &c.* Hier. in Epist. ad Tit. c. 1.

Presbyter differed nothing in Order, Dignity, or Power. But he was led into this Error meerly through Envy and Emulation, being vext to see that his Companion *Eustathius*, had gotten the Bishoprick of *Sebastia*, which himself had aimed at. This made him start aside, and talk extravagantly ; but the Church immediately branded him for an *Heretick*, and drove him and his Followers out of all Churches, and from all Cities and Villages. And *Epiphanius**, who was his Contemporary, represents him as very little better than a Mad-man ; and adds, That all Heresies that ever were from the beginning of the World, had been hatched either by Pride or Vain-glory, or Covetousness, or Emulation, or some such evil Inclination. But his Heresie, it seems, was not long-liv'd, for we hear no more concerning this Matter, till the Reformation at *Geneva*.

Secondly, We desire them to shew any Christian Church that did not constantly use *Liturgies*, and *Forms of Prayer*, in their Publick Offices and Administrations of Divine-Worship : I take it for granted, that there were Forms of Publick Prayer in the *Jewish Church* ; and I make no doubt, but that the use of such *Forms* was, together with many other *Synagogue* Rites and Usages, transferred into the Practice of the Christian Church, and did actually obtain, in the most early Ages in all Churches, where there were not miraculous Gifts, and every where, as soon as those miraculous Gifts ceased, it being very fit and proper, and agreeable to Order and Decency, that the People's Devotions should be thus conducted and governed in their Publick Ministrations. Not to insist upon the *Carmen*, or *Hymn*, which even the Proconsul *Pliny* says, the Christians upon a Set-day were wont, one among another, to

* Cont. Aer. hæret. 75.

say to Christ, as to their God; apparent Footsteps of some Passages of their Ancient *Liturgies* are yet extant in the Writings of * *Origen* and *St. Cyprian*: And when *Eusebius* gives us an Account how religiously *Constantine* the Great ordered his Court; That he was wont to take the Holy Bible into his Hands, and carefully to meditate upon it, and afterwards to offer up *Set* or *Composed* Prayers, together with his whole Royal Family; he adds, *He did this after the manner*, or in imitation of the Church of God. † *Nazianzen* tells us of *St. Basil*, That he composed *Orders* and *Forms* of Prayer, and appointed decent Ornaments for the Altar. And *St. Basil* himself reciting the manner of the Publick Service that was used in the Monastieal Oratories of his Institution, says, That nothing was done therein but what was consonant and agreeable to all the Churches of God. And the Council of *Laodicea*, holden much about the Year 365, expressly provides; That the same Liturgy, or Form of Prayers, should be always used both Morning and Evening: That so it might not be lawful for every one that would, to compose Prayers of his own Head, and to repeat them in the Publick Assemblies; as both *Zonaras* and *Balsamon* give the reason of that Canon ††. Further than this we need not go, the Case being henceforward evident beyond all contradiction.

Thirdly, Let them shew us any Church that did not always set apart and observe *Festival* Commemorations of the Saints: besides the more solemn Times for celebrating the great Blessings of our Redeemer, his *Birth-day* and *Epiphany*, *Easter* in Memory of his Resurrection, *Pentecost* or *Whitsontide* for

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* De vit. Constant. l. 4. c. 17.

† In Sanctum Basilium Orat. 20. Bas. Ep. 63.

†† Can. 18. Conf. Conc. Milev. Can. 12. Conc. Ca. th. 3.

the Mission of the Holy Ghost: They had Annual days for solemnizing the *Memories* of the blessed Apostles; they had their *Memoria* and *Natalitia Martyrum*, whereon they assembled every Year, to offer up to God their Praises and common Devotions, and by publick Panegyricks to do honour to the Memory of those Saints and Martyrs who had suffered for, or sealed Religion with their Blood. Not to mention their *Lent* Fast and their *Stationary* Fasts on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, which *Epiphanius* more than once expressly says, were a *Constitution* of the *Apostles**. But the less need be said on this Head, because few that have any Reverence for Antiquity, will have the hardiness to oppose it.

Fourthly, We desire them to produce any Church, since the Apostles Times, that had not its Rites and Ceremonies, as many (if not more) in number, and as liable to Exception, as those that are used in our Church at this day; nay, there are few things, if any at all, required by our Constitution, which were not in use in the best Ages of Christianity. This, were it my Design, I might demonstrate by an Induction of Particulars, but it is fully done by other Hands. I shall therefore, only as a *Specimen*, instance in one, and the rather because 'tis so much boggled at, (*viz.*) The *Sign of the Cross* in *Baptism*, which we are sure was a Common and Customary Rite in the Time of *Tertullian* and *St. Cyprian*†, the latter whereof says oft enough, That being regenerated, that is, baptized, they were signed with the sign of Christ; that they were signed on their foreheads, who were thought worthy to be admitted into the fellowship of our Lords Religion. And || *St. Basil* plainly puts it amongst

* Serm. compend. de Expos. fid. p. 466 Adv. Her. Hæres. 75.

† Cyp. adv. Demetr. p. 203. de Unit. Eccl. p. 185. vide de Lapf. p. 169.

|| Basil. de Spir. Sanct. c. 27.

amongst those ancient Customs of the Church, which had been derived from the Apostles: Nay, **Tertullian* assures us, that they used it in the most common Actions of Life; that upon every motion, at their going out and coming in, at their going to bath, or to bed, or to meals, or whatever their occasions called them to, they were wont to make the sign of the Cross on their foreheads; and therefore 'tis no wonder that they should never omit it in the most solemn Act of their being initiated into the Christian Faith. And now let our *Dissenting Brethren* seriously reflect, whether the constant and uniform Practice of the Church in all Times, be not a mighty Testimony against their Separating from us, upon the account of those Things which were used in the wisest, best, and happiest Ages of the Gospel; and when their Separation upon this account, can in point of Example pretend not to much more than a hundred years Countenance and Authority to support and shelter it. And yet it has not that neither; for I could easily shew, that most, if not all the Usages of our Church, are either practised in Foreign Churches, or at least, allowed of by the most Learned and Eminent Divines of the Reformation, † whose Testimonies, to this purpose, are particularly enumerated and ranked under their proper Heads by Mr. *Sprint*, in his || *Cassander Anglicanus*, which they that are curious may consult.

VI.

Sixthly, *We beg that those, who by their conformity have declared that they can close with our Communion, would still continue in the Communion of our Church.* This

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* *Tert. de Coron. mil. c. 3.*

† See *Durel's View of the Government and Publick Worship of God*, 1662.

|| P. 123, 124, &c.

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is a Request so reasonable, that I hope it cannot fairly be denied. Whatever Disatisfactions others may alledge to keep them at a distance from us, these Men can have nothing to pretend, having actually shewed that they can do it. For I am not willing to think, that herein such Men acted against their Consciences, or did it meerly to secure a gainful Office, or a place of Trust, or to escape the Last and Penalty of the Law. These are Ends so very vile and fordid, so horrible a prostitution of the Holy Sacrament, the most venerable Mystery of our Religion, so deliberate a way of Sinning, even in the most solemn Acts of Worship, that I can hardly suspect any should be guilty of it, but Men of profligate and Atheistical Minds, who have put off all Sense of God, and banished all Reverence of Religion. I would fain believe, that when any of our Brethren receive the Sacrament with us, they are fully perswaded of the lawfulness of it, and that the Principle that brings them thither, is the Conscience of their Duty. But then I know not how to Answer it, why the same Principle that brings them thither at one time, should not bring them also at another, and that we should never have their Company at that solemn and sacred Ordinance; but when the fear of some Temporal Punishment, or the prospect of some Secular Advantage prompts them to it. 'Tis commonly blamed in those of the *Romish* Church, that they can dispence with Oaths, and receive Sacraments to serve a turn, and to advance the Interest of their Cause: But God forbid, that so heavy a Charge should ever lye at the Doors of *Protestants*, and especially those who would be thought most to abhor Popish Practices, and who would take it ill to be accounted not to make as much, if not more, Conscience of their Ways than other Men. Now I beseech our *Dissenting* or rather *Inconstant Brethren*, to Reason a little; if our Communion be

sinful

sinful, why did they enter into it? If it be lawful, why do they forsake it? Is it not that which the Commands of Authority have tied upon us, and whose Commands we are bound to submit to, *not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake*? Are not the Peace and Unity of the Church, things that ought greatly to sway with all Sober, Humble, and Considering Christians? Does not the Apostle say, that *if it be possible, and as much as in us lies, we are to live peaceably with all Men*? And shall Peace be broken only in the Church, where it ought to be kept most entire, and that by those who acknowledge it to be possible, and within their Power? Are they satisfied in their Consciences, to join in Communion with us, and will they not do it for the sake of the Church of God? Or will they refuse to do what is lawful, and as the Case stands necessary, in order to Peace, only because Authority commands it, and has made it their Duty? Oh Sirs, I beseech you by all that's dear and sacred, to assist and help us, and not strengthen the Hands of those, who by a causeless and unjustifiable Separation, endeavour to rend and destroy the best Church in the whole Christian World.

VII.

Seventhly, *We beg of them that they would consider, what Sad and Deplorable Mischiefs have ensued, upon bearing down the Constitution of the Church of England.* This is matter of Fact, and whereof many yet alive were made sensible by woful Experience. Omitting what may seem of a little more remote Consideration, the Blood and Treasure, the Spoils and Ravages of the late War, the enslaving and oppressing all Ranks of Men, and what is above all, the murder of an excellent and incomparable Prince; I shall instance in a few Particulars, which were the more immediate Effects of it.

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And *First*, No sooner was the Church of *England* thrown down, but what monstrous Swarms of Errors and Heresies broke in upon us, both for Number and Impiety, beyond whatever had been heard of in the Church of God : And here I need go no further than the sad account which Mr. *Edwards* has given us in the several parts of his *Gangrena**. He was an eminent Minister of the *Presbyterian* Party, one, who, as he tells the *Parliament*, had out of Choice and Judgment, from the very beginning, embarked himself, with Wife Children, and Estate, and all that was dear to him, in the same Ship with them, to sink and perish, or to come safe to Land with them, and that in the most doubtful and difficult Times, not only in the beginning of the War and Troubles, in a malignant Place among Courtiers, where he had pleaded their Cause, justified their Wars, and satisfied many that Scrupled, but when their Affairs were at lowest, had been most zealous for them, Preaching, Praying, stirring up the People to stand for them, and had both gone out in Person, and lent Money to them : He held Correspondence with considerable Persons in all Parts of the Nation, and was careful to have the best Intelligence from all Quarters, and professes to lay down the Opinion and Errours which he mentions *in terminis*, and in their own Words and Phrases, Syllabically, and as near as might be. Now amongst infinite other things, he tells us, 'twas then commonly maintained. † *That the Scriptures cannot be said to be the Word of God, and are no more to be credited than the Writings of Men, being not a Divine but Humane Tradition ; That God has a hand in, and is the Author of the Sinfulness of his People,*

* Epist. Dedic. to *Gangren.* print. 1646.

† Catal and Discovery of Errors, p. 15. &c. vid. 2d part. p. 5. 23, 24, 27, 105, 110. fresh discov. p. 115, 162. & alibi passim.

not of the Actions alone, but of the very Pravity which is in them; that all Lyes come forth out of his Mouth; that the Prince of the Air that Rules in the Children of Disobedience is God; that in the Unity of the Godhead there is not a Trinity of Persons, but that it is a Popish Tradition; that the Doctrine of Repentance is a Soul destroying Doctrine, and that Children are not bound to Obey their Parents at all, if they be Ungodly; that the Soul of Man is mortal, as the Soul of a Beast; that there is no Resurrection at all of the Bodies of Men, nor Heaven nor Hell after this Life. I instance only in these as a Taste, not that they are all, or the hundredth part, no nor the worst, there being other Blaspheemies and Impieties which my Pen trembles to relate.

Secondly, The Liturgy of our Church being discharged and thrown out, and every one left to his own Liberty, 'tis scarce possible to believe what wild and prodigious Extravagancies were upon all Occasions used in holy Things, not in Preaching only, but especially in Prayer, the most immediate Act of Worship and Address to God. It is an affront to the Majesty of Religious Worship, that there should be any thing in it Childish and Trivial, Absurd and Frivolous, that its Sacred Mysteries should be exposed to Contempt and Scandal by that Levity and Distraction, that Heat and Boldness, those Weaknesses and Indiscretions, those loose, raw, and incongruous Effusions, which in most Congregations of those Times, did too commonly attend it. But the things I intend to instance in, are of a far worse Colour and Complexion; for whose Ears would it not make to tingle, to hear Men in the Pulpit telling God, * *That if he did not finish the good Work which he had begun in the Reformation of the Church, he* would

* View of the late Troubles in England, c. 43. p. 567, &c.
See also Edward's Gang. third part, a little before page. 17.

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would shew himself to be the God of Confusion, and such a one, as by cunning Stratagems had contrived the Destruction of his own Children: That God would bless the King, and mollifie his hard Heart, that delights in Blood, for that he was fallen from Faith in God, and become an Enemy to his Church: Let thine Hand, we pray thee, O Lord, our God, be upon him, and upon his Fathers House, but not upon thy People, that they should be plagued: O God, O God, many are the Hands lift up against us, but there is one God, it is thou thy self, O Father, who dost us more Mischief than they all. We know, O Lord, that Abraham made a Covenant, Moses and David made a Covenant, and our Saviour made a Covenant, but thy Parliaments Covenant is the greatest of all Covenants. I presume the devout and serious Reader desires no more of such intolerable, profane and lewd Stuff as this is: They that are curious of more, may find it, besides others, in *The short view of the late Troubles in England*, where Times, Places, and Persons, are particularly named.

Thirdly, The Fences of Order and Discipline in the Church of *England* being broken down, what a horrid Inundation of all manner of Vice and Wickedness did immediately overflow the Land? The *Assembly at Westminster* * petitioned the Parliament, That some severe Course might be taken against Fornication, Adultery and Incest, which, say they, do greatly abound, especially of late, by reason of Impunity. And Mr. Edwards † speaking of the whole Tribe of *Sectaries*, tells us, *He was confident, that for this many hundred years there had not been a Party that hath pretended to so much Holiness, Strictness, power of Godliness, tenderness of Conscience, above all other Men, as this Party hath done, that hath been guilty* of

* July 19. 1644.

† *Further Discov.* p. 187: Third Part, p. 185, &c.

of so great Sins, horrible Wickedness, provoking Abominations, as they are; with much more both there and elsewhere, to the same purpose, and the Charge very often made good by particular Instances. So that indeed Hell seemed to have broke loose, and to have invaded all Quarters, in despite of their Covenant, and all the little Schemes of their so much magnified Reformation: The Covenant cries (God grant not against you) for Reformation of the Kingdom, the Extirpation of Heresies, Schisms, Profaneness, &c. and these Impieties abound, as if we had taken a Covenant to maintain them; and since it was taken, these Sins which we have covenanted against, have more abounded, than in the space of Ten Times so many years before, as Mr. Jenkin tells the Lords in Parliament*. And that all that I have mentioned (which yet is infinitely short of what might be said) was the effect of the Ruin of the Church of England, and let in by the Method they took for Reformation, we have from their own Confessions. †We, says Mr. Edwards, in these four last years, have overpassed the Deeds of the Prelates, and justified the Bishops, in whose time never so many, nor so great Errors were heard of, much less such Blasphemies and Confusions; we have worse things among us, than ever were in all the Bishops days; more corrupt Doctrines and unheard of Practices, than in Eighty years before.—— I am perswaded, if Seven Years ago, the Bishops and their Chaplains had but preached, printed, licensed, dispersed up and down in City and Country openly, a quarter of these Errors, Heresies, Blasphemies, which have been all these ways vented by the Sectaries, the People would have risen up, and stoned them, and pulled down their Houses, and forced them to forbear such Doctrines: O how is this Scene changed within these few Years! And not long after, he tells

* Fast Sermon, Jan. 27. 1646. p. 29.]

† Cat. and Discov. p. 73, 74, 76.

tells us, *That these are Risen, Increased, Reign and Prevail, so far under a Parliament Sitting, not under Bishops, Corrupt Clergy, Court Party, but under a Parliament. And in his Epistle to the Lords and Commons, before the first part of his Gangræna, he tells them, That the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and Practices, of the Sectaries of this Time, had been Broached and Acted within these Four last Years in England, and that in Your Quarters, and in the places under your Government and Power, for which I tremble to think, least the whole Kingdom should be in God's Black Bill; that together with their Reformation, come in a Deformation, and worse things were come upon them, than ever they had before; they had put down the Book of Common-Prayer, but there were many amongst them, that have put down the Scriptures, slighting, yea, Blaspheming them: he tells them, they had cast out the Bishops and their Officers, and they had many that had cast down to the Ground all Ministers in all the Reformed Churches; they had cast out Ceremonies in the Sacraments, and they had many that had cast out the Sacraments themselves; with many more sad Complaints which he there makes. To sum up all in the Words of my Author*: In this Catalogue the Reader may see great Errours, and yet may turn himself again and behold greater, namely damnable Heresies, and yet turn himself again and read horrid Blasphemies; and a third time, and read horrible Disorders, Confusions, strange and unheard of Practices, not only against the Light of Scripture, but Nature, as in Women's Preaching, in Stealing away Mens Wives and Children from Husbands and Parents, in Baptizing Women Naked, in the Presence and Sight of Men, &c. And thus we see by what means it was that the Nation came to be pestered with Opinions and Practices, Impious beyond the Example of former Ages, and such as were not once named among*
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* Ubi supra, p. 73.

the Gentiles, to the infinite Prejudice and Dishonour both of our Religion and our Nation. It being the Observation which an Ingenious Foreigner*, who resided at *London* in those Times, made upon this occasion ; *One of the Fruits*, says he, *of this blessed Parliament, and of these two Sectaries* (Presbyterians and Independants) *is, that they have made more Jews and Atheists, than I think there is in all Europe besides.*

I doubt not, but the greatest part of our Dissenters, do from their Souls detest the Heresies, Blasphemies, and Wickednesses that have been mentioned; but then the Consideration ought to oblige them to double their Diligence to prevent the like dismal Effects for the time to come, and not open the Gap again, at which they must necessarily flow in upon us. By what has been done they may see, what a Blessed Reformation they may expect by the Ruin of this Church ; *for the thing that hath been is that which shall be* ; the same Causes set on foot by the same Principles will Eternally produce the same Effects ; and though Men at first may mean never so well, yet Temptations will insensibly grow upon them, and Accidents happen, which in the Progress will carry them, infinitely beyond the Line of their first Intentions, and engage them in Courses, out of which, when they come to discern their Error, it may be too late for them to Retire. In the beginning of the long Parliament, I make no Question, but the far greatest part of them met together with very honest and good Intentions, and designed no more than to correct some little Irregularities, which they apprehended to be in Church or State : But we see how these very Persons were carried from one Pas-

* A Letter from a Noble Venetian to Card. Barbarino translated and Printed 1648. p. 19.

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Passage to another ; and in time transported to those very things which at first they had so vehemently protested and declared against, till at length, horrid Enormities came to be acted by and under them, which no Age can Parallel : which ought to be a sufficient Caution to all, how they shake the least Stone, that belongs to the Foundation, least by picking out one after another, the whole House tumble about their Ears, when it is beyond their own Power to support it. I shall shut up this Head with a brief Recapitulation of some of those Inferences, which Mr. *Edwards* makes from the State of those Loose and Licentious Times we have been speaking of, and then leave the Reader to judge, whether they be not as applicable to present Circumstances, under which we are : He infers thus, * *First*, we may hence see how dangerous it is to despise and let alone a small Party. *Secondly*, That it is more than time fully and effectually to settle the Government and Discipline of the Church : *Thirdly*, What the Mischief, Evil, and Danger of a Toleration and pretended Liberty of Conscience would be to this Kingdom, and what it would prove and produce. *Fourthly*, That it sufficiently justifies in the sight of the World, those Ministers and People, who are Zealous for settling Religion, and cry out for Government, who Preach, Petition, speak often one to another of these things. *Fifthly*, What a great Evil and Sin, Separation is from the Communion of the Reformed Churches, and how highly displeasing to God, for Men to make a Rent and Schism in the Church of God. *Sixthly*. That all such who have been deceived and drawn away, under pretence of greater Purity, Holiness, &c. and have any Fear and
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* Cat. and Discov. part. 3d. p. 52, 53, 57, 70. Further Discov. p. 195, 203.

Awe of God and his Word, be exhorted to leave and forsake them, and return to the Publick Assemblies and Communion of this and other Reformed Churches. And God grant we may hearken to this Counsel, and may seriously lay these things to Heart.

VIII.

Eighthly, *We desire it may be considered, what plain and apparent Advantages Separation gives to the Common Enemy of the Protestant Religion in these Nations*: The Church of England is notoriously known to have been the most strong and Standing Bulwark of Protestantcy, ever since the Reformation; for being founded on Scripture Grounds, and the Practice of True, Genuine, Primitive Antiquity, and having been reformed, by the most wise, regular and justifiable Methods; it stands like a Rock impregnable against all the Assaults, which the Church of Rome makes upon it. This has engaged them to plant all their Batteries to beat it down, as being the only Church considerable enough to stand in their Way: And when not able to effect it by any other Arts, they have betaken themselves to the old Artifice of Ruining us, by dividing us. In order hereunto, they have upon all Occasions strenuously promoted the Separation, mixed themselves with our Dissenters, put on every Shape, that they might the better follow the common out-cry against our Church, as *Popish* and Antichristian, spurring on the People, to call for a more pure and spiritual way of Worship, and to clamour for Liberty and Toleration, as wherein they well knew they themselves were like to have the greatest share; and that having subverted all Order, and beaten People out of all sober Principles, they foresaw they must be necessitated at last to center in the Communion of the *Romish Church*. This was a Trade they began betimes, almost in the very
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fancy of the Reformation. Witness the Story of *Faithful Commion*, a *Dominican* Fryer, who passed under the notion of a Zealous Puritan, and was much admired and followed by the People for his seeming Piety, Spiritual Gifts, and Zeal against Popery. by being apprehended, *Anno* 1567. and accused for an *Impostor*, was examined at large before the Queen and her Council, and put under Bail, when finding the Climate was like to be too hot for him, and having by a cheat brought off his Bail, and told his deluded Followers, that he was acquitted by her Majesty and the Council, and warned of God to go beyond the Seas, to instruct the *Protestants* there, and that he would come again; and having assured them that Spiritual Prayer was the chief Testimony of a true Protestant, and that the Set Form of Prayer in *England*, was but the Mass Translated, and having with abundance of Extempore Prayers and Tears, squeezed out of them a Collection of a hundred and Thirty Pounds for his Journey, besides private Gifts; away he goes for *Rome*, and acquaints Pope *Pius Quintus* with what he had done, and by what Methods, and how odious he had made the Church of *England* to the *Puritans*, and that it would be a stumbling-block to that Church while it was a Church. Upon which the *Pope* commended and rewarded him with Two Thousand Ducats for his good Service. All which Particulars are more fully made out from Secretary **Cecil's* Papers, whose Memorials were lately brought to light. Witness also that other Passage concerning *Thomas Heath* a *Jesuite*, who, much about the same time, was sent over into *England* to Act the same Part, which he did, not only by Preaching, but by crying up Spiritual Prayers, and running down all Set Forms, as being

* *Foxes and Firebrands*, Print. 1680. p. 7. &c.

being without any warrant from Scripture, by labouring to refine the Protestants, as he called it, and to take off all smacks of Ceremonies, that in the least tended to the *Romish* Faith. For all which he was mightily flock'd after, and admired every day more and more. But *Anno* 1568, he was discovered by a Letter, that casually dropt out of his Pocket, as he was Preaching in the Pulpit at *Rochester*, importing, that the Council of their Fraternity had sent him Collections and Instructions for the carrying on the Work, and that this way of dividing Protestants was the only way for the recalling Men back again to the Mother Church. Hereupon he was examined by the Bishop of *Rochester*, and did not much deny the main of the Charge; and upon the searching of his Lodgings, there were found several Books fitted for his Purpose, as against Infant-Baptism, &c. and in one of his Boots, a Licence from the Fraternity of the Jesuits, and a *Bull* of *Pius Quintus*, giving him leave to preach what Doctrine that Society pleased, for the dividing the English Protestants, or, as he called them, *Hereticks*; the issue was, that *Heath* was close Imprisoned, set in the Pillory at the High Cross, his Ears cut off, his Nose slit, his Fore-head branded, and he condemned to perpetual Imprisonment; but soon after he died suddenly, being suspected to have poysoned himself: The whole account hereof being published from the authentick Register of the Church of *Rochester*.

The same Course, we need not doubt, the *Papists* held on in the succeeding Times, these being some of the main Directions which * *Contzen* the Jesuit gives for the reducing *Popery* into a Country, that it be done under pretence of Ease to tender Consciences, and that Liberty be granted to that End; and that

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* *Polit. l. 2. c. 18. Sect. 6.*

as much use be made of the Division of Enemies, as of the Agreement of Friends. What a stroke they had in fomenting the Differences and Distractions that brought on the late Civil Wars, and how active they were both in the Councils and Proceedings of the *Parliament* Party, the World need not be told at this time of day; *Great numbers of them, both Commanders and others, serving in their Armies, great Industry was used to corrupt the Loyalty and Affection of those of that Religion, and private Promises and Undertakings were made to them, that if they would assist them against the King, all the Laws made in their prejudice should be repealed* *. As the late King, of blessed Memory, tells the World in one of his publick Declarations, after the Victory at *Edghil*; adding, that tho' some few of eminent Abilities for Command and Conduct, and of moderate and unfactionous Dispositions, were employed in his Service; yet, *we are confident, that a far greater number of that Religion is in the Army of the Rebels, than in our own*. And the King, it seems, had good Reason to say so. For as *de Salmonet*, a Secular Priest, who wrote in French a History of our late Civil Wars, informs us, in that very Fight at *Edghil*, besides two Companies of *Walloons*, and other *Roman Catholick* that served there, that (says he) which did most surprize every Body, was, that several *Popish* Priests were found amongst the Dead that were slain on the *Parliament* side. So plain is it, that they served in their Armies, were present at their Councils, and upon all Occasions mix'd with their Parties, that they might widen the Breach beyond all Recovery. Thus was it then. And about the Time of the King's coming in, † a Letter of Advice

* *Octob. 23. 1642. vid Collect. of the Kings Works, part. 2. fol. 213. L' Histoire des Troubles, &c. p. 165. See the short View of the late Troubles in Engl c. 43 p. 564.*

† See Dr. *Stillingfleet's* Preface to the Unreasonableness of Separation, p. 20, &c.

Advice was written by *Seignior Ballarini* concerning the best way of managing the Popish Interest in *England* upon his Majesty's Restauration; wherein it was advised, especially to obstruct the Settlement of the Fundamental Constitutions of the Kingdom, to set up the prosperous way of Fears and Jealousies of the King and Bishops, to asperse the Bishops and Ministers of the Church of *England*, and to represent its Doctrine and Worship as coming too near to the Church of *Rome*, to second the Faction in promoting an Indulgence, and to endeavour, that the Trade and Treasure of the Nation might be engrossed between themselves and other Discontented Parties. And Mr. Coleman * himself owned it at his Condemnation, that perhaps he thought that Popery might come in, if Liberty of Conscience had been granted. And this is that which Wise Archbishop *Whigift* long ago foresaw would come to pass, when he told the *Dissenters* of those days, *I am perswaded that Antichrist worketh effectually at this Day, by our Scirs and Contentions, whereby he hath, and will more prevail against this Church of England, than by any other means whatsoever.* And now, upon the whole matter, I desire our *Dissenting Brethren* to consider, whether the orderly and truly Primitive Constitution of the Church of *England*, or Innovation, Schism, and Separation, be the liklier way to keep out Popery; and do therefore conjure them, by all the Kindness which they pretend for the Protestant Religion, heartily to joyn in Communion with us, as which I believe, humanly speaking, to be, if not the only, at least the only safe and durable Means of shutting Popery for ever out of Doors.

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IX. Ninthly,

* Coleman's Tryal, p. 101. Defence of his Answ. to the Admonit. p. 349.

IX.

Ninthly, *We desire of them, that if neither these, nor any other Advices and Considerations can prevail with them, they would at least cease to reproach the Government for reviving the Execution of the Laws about these matters.* I know it is very natural to Men to complain, when any thing pinches them, but then they ought to be so just, as to consider whose Fault it is that has brought it upon them. The Laws in this Case were framed with great Advice, and upon dear-bought Experience ; and every Nation in the World thinks it self obliged, when no other ways will do it, by Penalties to secure the Publick Peace, Safety, and Tranquility of the State, though it may sometimes press hard in some particular Cases, when Men through Fancy, Humour, Mistake, or Design (especially about little, and as themselves confess indifferent Matters) shall endanger the Publick Welfare, and by an ill Example expose the Reverence and Majesty of the Laws. And yet notwithstanding all this, and a great deal more that might be said, we find them at every turn charging the Government, for using them cruelly, and with the hardest Measure, censuring their Superiours, and *speaking evil of Dignities* ; and this not only the Cry of the mean and common Sort, but of their chiefest Leaders, even to this Hour : It being no hard Matter (but that I love not to exasperate) to instance in several Things, that are no very good Arguments of that *Obedient Patience*, which some of them so much pretend to. It is far from my Temper to delight in Cruelty, much more to plead for Severity to be used towards *Dissenting Brethren*, and therefore should have said nothing in this Argument, were it not necessary to vindicate the Government, which upon these Occasions I have so often heard blamed and censured. I would these Persons, who complain so much

much, would consider a while, how their Predecessors were dealt with in the Times of the good Queen Elizabeth; which will appear either from the Laws then made, or from the Proceedings then had against them. The Laws then made against them, were chiefly these: In the First of the Queen, *An Act for the Uniformity of Common-Prayer, &c.* wherein, among other Clauses and Penalties, it is provided, *That if any Person shall in any Plays, Songs, Rhimes, or by other open Words, declare or speak any thing in the derogation, depraving, or despising the Book of Common-Prayer, or any thing therein contained, being thereof lawfully convicted, he shall forfeit for the First Offence an hundred, for the Second four hundred Marks, for the Third all his Goods and Chattels, and shall suffer Imprisonment during Life.* A Clause, which had it been kept up in its due Life and Power, our *Liturgy* and *Divine Offices* had been treated with much more Respect and Reverence, than I am sure they have met with, especially of late. In her Fifth Year an Act was passed for the due Execution of the Writ *de Excommunicato capiendo*; amongst others, particularly levelled against such as refuse to receive the Holy Communion, or to come to Divine Service, as now commonly used in the Church of *England*, with severe Penalties upon those that shall not yield up themselves to the same Writ. *Anno 13.* passed an Act of General Pardon, but it was with an Exception of all those that had committed any Offence against the *Act for the Uniformity of Common-Prayer*, or were Publishers of Seditious Books, or Disturbers of *Divine Service*. *Anno 23.* by an Act to retain the Queens Majesty's Subjects in their due Obedience, it is provided, *That every Person above the Age of Sixteen years, which shall no tre- pair to some Church or usual Place of Common-Prayer, but forbear the same by the space of a Month, shall for every such Month forfeit Twenty Pounds.* Which Act

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was again confirmed and ratified by another in the 29th Year of Her Reign, with many Clauses and Provisions for the better Execution of it. And by the Act of the 35th of her Reign, if any person so forbearing shall willingly joyn in, or be present at any Assemblies, Conventicles and Meetings, under colour or pretence of any Exercise of Religion, contrary to the Laws of the Realm, such Person being lawfully convicted, shall be Imprisoned without Bail or Mainprize, until he conform; and if he do not that within Three Months, he shall be obliged to Abjure the Realm, and if refusing to Abjure, or returning without Licence, he shall be adjudged a Felon, and suffer, as in case of Felony, without Benefit of Clergy.

Such were Her Laws, and such also were her Proceedings, against those who faultered in their Conformity, or began to innovate in the Discipline of the Church; and these Proceedings as quick and smart as any can be said to be against the *Dissenters* of this Time. Do they complain of their Ministers being Silenced now? So they were then, being deprived of their Benefices and Church-Preferments, for their Inconformity. Thus *Samson* was turned out of his Deanry of *Christ-Church*, for refusing to conform to the Orders and Ceremonies of the Church. *Cartwright*, the very Head of them, expelled the College, and deprived of the Lady *Margaret's* Lecture. *Travers* turned out from Preaching at the *Temple*; with many more, suspended from the Ministry by the Queen's Authority, and the Approbation of the Bishops, for not subscribing to some New Rites and Ceremonies imposed upon them; as appears from *Bezæ's* Letter to Bishop *Grindal*, Anno 1566. Are any in Prison? So they were then, *Benson*, *Button*, *Halling-*
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ham, Cartwright, Knewstubs, and many others ; some in the Marshalsea, others in the White-Lyon ; some in the Gatehouse, others in the Compter, or in the Clink, or in Bridewel, or in Newgate ; Poor Men, miserably handled with Revilings, Deprivations, Imprisonments, Banishments ; if we may believe what themselves tell us, both in the First and Second Admonition. And what is yet far beyond any thing, which God be thanked our Dissenters can pretend to complain of, several of them lost their Lives ; Barrow and Greenwood were executed for their Scandalous and Seditious Writings ; Penry and Udal indicted and arraigned for defaming the Queen's Government in a Scandalous Book, written against the supposed Governours, as they called them, of the Church of England, for which they were both Cast and Condemned, to be Executed as Felons ; but Archbishop Whitgift interposing, they were Reprieved, and Udal suffered to die, as he did soon after, in his Bed. The Truth is, the Wise and Wary Queen beheld Schism growing on apace, and needed not to be told what ill Influence it was like to have, both upon Church and State, and therefore resolved to carry a straight Hand, as well over Puritanism on the one side, as Popery on the other ; and in order hereunto, she charged Archbishop Whitgift * to be Vigilant and Careful to reduce Ministers by their Subscription and Conformity to the settled Orders and Government, adding, *That She would have the Discipline of the Church of England formerly Established, of all Men duly to be Observed, without Alteration of the least Ceremony.* But nothing more fully discovers her Judgment and Resolution in this Matter, than what She gave in Command to the Lord Keeper Puckering

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* Sir G. Paul's Life of Archb. Whitgift, Numb. 35. p. 29.

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kering, to tell the Parliament; Part of his Speech (transcrib'd and published some years since from the original Copy, under his own Hand-Writing, by an eminent Divine * of this Church) was as followeth;

— And especially you are Commanded by
 ' Her Majesty to take heed that no Ear be given,
 ' or Time afforded, to the wearisome Sollicitations
 ' of those that commonly be called *Puritans*, where-
 ' withal the late Parliaments have been exceeding-
 ' ly importuned. Which sort of Men, whilst in
 ' the Giddiness of their Spirits, they labour and
 ' strive to advance a new Eldership, they do no-
 ' thing else but disturb the good Repose of the
 ' Church and Common-wealth; which is as well-
 ' grounded for the Body of Religion it self, and as
 ' well-guided for the Discipline, as any Realm that
 ' that professeth the Truth. And the same thing is
 ' already made good to the World, by many of
 ' the Writings of Learned and Godly Men, neither
 ' Answered nor Answerable, by any of these new
 ' fangled Refiners. And as the present Casestandeth,
 ' it may be doubted, whether they or the Jesuits do
 ' offer more Danger, or be more speedily to be re-
 ' pressed: For albeit the Jesuits do impoison the
 ' Hearts of her Majesty's Subjects, under a Pretext
 ' of Conscience, to withdraw them from their Obe-
 ' dience due to her Majesty, yet do the same but
 ' closely, and only in Privy Corners, but these Men
 ' do both Publish in their printed Books, and Teach
 ' in all their Conventicles sundry Opinions, not on-
 ' ly dangerous to the well-settled Estate and Policy
 ' of the Realm, but also much derogatory to her
 ' Sacred Majesty, and her Crown, as well by, &c.
 ' In

* Dr. Pierce new Discov. against Mr. Baxter, 1659. Ch. 15.
 Sect. 12. p. 109.

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In all which things, however in many other Points they pretend to be at War with the Popish Jesuits, yet by the Separation of themselves from the Unity of their Fellow Subjects, and by abusing the Sacred Authority and Majesty of their Prince, they do both joyn and concur with the Jesuits in opening the Door, and preparing the way to the *Spanish* Invasion that is threatened against the Realm. Thus far he, by *Her Majesty's most Royal Pleasure and wise Direction*, as he there speaks. To which let me add, That the Speech took such effect, that the Parliament passed the Act of 35th of *Eliz.* the severest Act against the Dissenters in the whole Body of our Laws. And indeed, so Jealous was the Queen of the least Appearances of Innovation, that Archbishop *Grindall*, only for giving too much Encouragement to Prophefying (which were beheld as likely to prove Nurseries of Schism and Faction, as indeed they did) fell under Her Displeasure, and was Sequestred from his Archiepiscopal Jurisdiction; and though great Intercession was made in his Behalf, yet could he never be restored to his dying day.

This was the State of Things then, and yet these were the Proceedings of those Days, which our Dissenters at another time are wont so much to magnifie and extol; nothing of late having been so much in their Mouth, as the Wisdom and Prudence, the Care and Diligence, the Zeal and Piety of Good Queen *Elizabeth*. I speak not this to cast any Reflection upon the Memory of that incomparable Princess, whom we have all the reason in the World to own to have been the Glorious Instrument of Perfecting and Settling the Reformation in this Kingdom, and whose Memory will be dear and precious, as long as the

the Protestant Name has a Being in England. But I only take notice how extreamly partial People are, and how apt to be prejudic'd against the present Government under which they live, and to be always crying out, *That the former days were better than these*; whereas, supposing their Circumstances were really harder than they are, and harder than those of the Puritans in former Times, yet they have no reason to accuse the Government of Rigour and Severity towards them, if three things be farther taken into Consideration.

First, That the *Dissenters* of old, especially the first Race of them, were generally much more Modest and Peaceable than those of latter Times, more conformable to the Laws, less turbulent and offensive to the Government; when they could not conform as Ministers, they yet did as private Christians, and quietly acquiesced in their Suspension or Deprivation, and as one truly says of them, *When they could not be Active without Sinning*, [as they judged] *they could be Passive without Murmuring*. They meddled not with things without their Line, nor mix'd themselves with Matters of State*; declared, that Kings have Power by the Law of God, to make such Ecclesiastical Laws as tend to the good ordering of the Churches in their Dominions; that the Churches ought not to be Disobedient to any of their Laws; that if any thing were commanded contrary to the Word, they ought not to resist the King therein, but peaceably to forbear Disobedience, and

* See a Book called, *The Protestation of the King's Supremacy*, 1605. Numb. 8, 9, 11.

and sue to him for Grace and Mercy, and where that cannot be obtained, meekly to submit themselves to the Punishment. They generally came to Church, and did not run into separate Congregations, nay writ stoutly and smartly against those who began then to attempt a Separation. But whether our Modern *Dissenters* have observed the same Course, and be of this Spirit and Temper, let the World judge, yea, let themselves be Judges in the Case.

Secondly, Sad Experience of the Evil Consequences of Schism and Separation, have made it necessary for the Government to take all just and lawful Ways for preventing the like for the time to come. Men first began to be dissatisfied with the Rites and Orders of the Church, then discontented that they were not presently gratified with an Alteration; Discontent brought on Sedition, Sedition Rebellion, and Rebellion the Ruin of Church and State. And what wonder if the Laws bear a little hard there, where there are the same Appearances, and where there seem to be the same Tendencies and Inclinations to the same dismal State of Things? Whoever considers by what ways the most flourishing Kingdom in the World, and the best Church that ever was since the Primitive Times, were miserably harrass'd and destroyed, cannot think, that those who sit at the Helm should be content to have them ruined again by the same Means; especially, after the King, for several Years together, has in vain tryed, by all the Methods of Favour and Indulgence, to win upon them.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, Let those who now complain so much consider, how little Favour themselves shewed to others when they were in Power ; how the Loyal and Episcopal Party were Plundered, Sequestred, Decimated, Dungeoned, Starved, and often stunk to Death : What Oaths and Covenants were rigorously imposed upon them ; what Restraints laid upon their Liberties, both Civil and Ecclesiastical ; though all this while they had Law and Right standing for them. In the Year 1645, an Ordinance of Parliament was published, * *That if any person hereafter shall at any time use, or cause to be used, the Book of Common-prayer in any Church or publick place of Worship, or in any private Place or Family within the Kingdom ; every Person so offending, should for the first Offence pay the Sum of Five, for the second Ten pounds, and for the third should suffer one whole year's Imprisonment, without Bail or Mainprize.* This one would think was very hard, but there is something harder yet behind ; for Cromwel being got into the Throne, published a Declaration, at that time equivalent to a Law, † *That no person who had been sequestred for Delinquency, or had been in Arms against the Parliament, or adhered thereunto, or had abetted or assisted the Forces raised against them, should keep in their Houses or Families, as Chaplains or Schoolmasters for the Education of their Children, any sequestred or ejected Minister, Fellow of a Colledge, or Schoolmaster, nor permit any of their Children to be taught by such, upon pain of being proceeded against as was directed ; and that no person who had been sequestred or ejected for Delinquency or Scandal, shall hereafter keep any*

* An Ordinance for putting in Execution the Directory,
Aug. 11. 1645.

† 24. Nov. 1655.

any School, either publick or private, nor preach in any publick place, or at any private Meeting of any other Person than those of his own Family, nor administer Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, or marry any persons, or use the Book of Common-Prayer, or the Forms of Prayer therein contained, upon pain that every person so offending in any of the Premises, shall be proceeded against as by the said Order is provided and directed. There needs no Comment upon these Proceedings, they do not only whisper, but speak aloud to the present Generation of Dissenters, to tell them how little reason they have to complain.

X.

Lastly, *We beg of them, that before they pull down any further Trouble or Suffering upon themselves, they would consider, Whether the Cause they engage in, be such as will bear them out with Comfort before God another Day.* 'Tis not suffering or refusing to comply with the External Circumstances of our Religion, that can be said to be a *Persecution for Righteousness sake*, it not being the Suffering, but the Cause that makes the Martyr. Then I suffer as a *Christian*, when the Honour of Christ, or something that offers Violence to my Religion, and Christianity is concerned in it; when I suffer for that which I cannot avoid, without disowning my self to be a Christian, and *making Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience*. But where the Case is not evidently this, a Man may draw Miseries upon himself, and yet not suffer as a Christian, because it may proceed from Humour, or Interest, or the Conduct of a misinformed Judgment, mistaking things for what they are not: Men very often place Religion in doing, or not doing, what is no part of it, and then think they may safely Suffer upon that account, when there is more, it may be, of Passion

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Passion, or Prejudice, of Fancy or Opinion, of Humour or Mistake, than of the real Concerns of Piety or Religion. I am very sure, neither the Ancient Christians would have passed through the Fiery-Tryal every Day, nor the Holy Martyrs in Queen Mary's Days have thought themselves obliged to Forfeit their Estates, much less their Lives, had no more been required of them than there is of us to come to Church, or to Kneel at the Sacrament; but would rather have blessed God, and thankfully owned the favour of the Governours, under which they lived, might they have enjoyed both upon the same Terms as we do. In Cases that only concern indifferent Things, and meer Circumstances of Worship, stily and obstinately to stand out, is rather for a Man to be a Martyr to his own Humour and Opinion, than to the Cause of Christ. Whether this be not the Case of our *Dissenting Brethren*, they themselves might quickly see, would they but lay aside the Unreasonableness of their Prejudices, and lay no more stress upon things than they ought to bear. Let us hear what Mr. *Baxter**, in a late Book says to this matter, *I am one that have been first in all the Storms that have befallen the Ministry these Twenty Years past, (to look no further back) and yet my Conscience commandeth me to say, as I have oft done, that many through mistake, I am perswaded, now suffer as Evil-doers for a Cause that is not Good and Justifiable. I shall leave with them the Wise and Excellent Counsel which was given by one in the Time of the Elder Puritans, † Follow True Antiquity, and the general Practice of the Church of God in all Ages,*
where

* Obed. Patience, p. 79.

† R. Bernard's Christian Advert. and Counsels of Peace.
 1608.

where they have not erred from the evident Truth of God. If thou Suffereſt, let it be for known Truth, and againſt known Wickedneſs ; for which thou haſt Example in God's Word, or of the Holy Martyrs in Church-story. But beware of far-fetched Conſequences, or for Suffering for new Devices, and for things formerly unto all Ages unknown, ſeem they never ſo Holy and Juſt unto Men.

All that now remains, is to call upon our Diſſenting Brethren, by all the Conſiderations of Love and Kindneſs to themſelves, of Tenderneſs for the Honour of Religion, the Edification of their Brethren, and the Peace, Security, and Welfare of the Church and State wherein they live, that they would duly and impartially Weigh and Conſider things, put a ſtop to the Separation wherein they are engaged, return to, and hold Communion with us, and keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.

Let them bethink themſelves what a mighty Evil Schiſm is, and will be ſo found before God at the laſt Day, and whether any thing can be meet to put in the Ballance with the Peace and Unity of the Church, and thoſe vaſtly important Conſequences that depend upon it. Let us conſider a little, what a deep Senſe the beſt and moſt pious Chriſtians that ever were, had of it : *It's better to ſuffer any thing, than that the Church of God ſhould be rent aſunder ; it is every whit as glorious, and, in my Opinion, a far greater Martyrdom, to dye for not Dividing the Church, than for reſuſing to Sacrifice to Idols, ſays Dionyſius, the good Biſhop of Alexandria, in his Letter to Novatian.* And St. Cyprian * ſpeaks very ſevere things to this purpoſe ; ' That a Perſon going from the Church ' to Schiſmaticks, tho' in that Capacity he ſhould ' dye for Chriſt, yet can he not receive the Crown ' of

* Ap. Euseb. lib. 6. c. 45. Epist. 52. (ad Antonian) de Unit. Eccles. fol. 181, 184, &c.

‘ of Martyrdom’. And how oft elsewhere doth he tell us, ‘ That such a one has no part in the Law of God, or the Faith of Christ, or in Life and Salvation ; that without this Unity and Charity, a Man *cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven* ; and that although he should deliver up himself to the Flames, or cast his Body to wild Beasts, yet this would not be the Crown of his Faith, but the Punishment of his Falshood, not the Glorious Exit of a Religious Courage, but the Issue of Despair ; such a One may be Killed, but he cannot be Crown’d : He rents the Unity of the Church, destroys the Faith, disturbs the Peace, dissolves Charity, and Profanes the Holy Sacrament.’ And were it necessary, I could shew, that the Ancient Fathers say the same thing. And can we now be such degenerate Christians, (if we can be said to be Christians at all) as to make nothing at all of Schism and Separation ; are not the Glory of God, the Peace of the Church, and the Good of Souls, things as considerable, as necessary and indispensible now, as they were of old ? I beseech you, Brethren, return from whence you are fallen, and let us all with one Shoulder set our selves to Support that Church, with whose Ruin we are all likely to sink and fall. Let us lay aside *Envy and Strife, Confusion and every Evil Work*, and let us follow after the things which make for Peace, and things wherewith one may Edifie another.

THE
Church of ENGLAND
 Free from the
 IMPUTATION
 OF
 POPERY.

THE IMPUTATION.

THE Case between the Church of *England*, and the *Dissenters* from it, requiring not much of Learning or Speculation; it might well seem to be no difficult Matter to see into the bottom of it, and clear the Difference. And indeed the Duty of Obedience in things indifferent, and the Obligation of each Christian to preserve the Unity of the Church are so convincing, and the Expedience of some Ceremonies in general, and the Innocence of ours in particular so plain; that the Reconciliation of our Brethren to us, upon the view of our Reasons, and the Answers we have given to their Scruples, might be easily expected; were there not some General

Prejudice upon the Minds of otherwise well-disposed Men, that, like an interposing Mist, either diverts the Light that would otherwise come in, or lets it not appear in its own Colour.

And this seems to be no other than the Opinion many have been possess'd with, that our Worship is Popery; and that to return to our Communion is to make a step towards *Rome*, to joyn Company with those that are going thither. For this Conceit once entertained, a Minister of the Church of *England*, is a disguised Emissary of the *Romish* Church; and all the Arguments and Perswasions he offers for Conformity, are received no better, than if he was endeavouring to pervert to the Papal Superstition. If we speak to them of the *Common Prayer* they think of the *Mass*; and while we Discourse to them of the Fitness and Lawfulness of Kneeling at the Communion, they imagine nothing else but the Worship of the Host, and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

By whose Malice and Artifice soever this Prejudice has been raised and cherished; they, we must confess, have gained their point by it. They have stopt the Ears, and blinded the Eyes of those that otherwise would know the Voice of their Brethren. The Aversion of the People deservedly raised against Popery, they have had the skill to turn against the greatest and best Church of the Reformation: And they have had the Pleasure to put her under the most sensible Affliction of lying under an Imputation she so much abhors, and hearing her self reckoned amongst those she has so openly and so justly condemned.

None can be ignorant how far this Prejudice has prevailed, and with what Success; though indeed it is a Conceit so unlikely and inconsistent, that we might well expect no rational Person should have entertained it: And did not Popery let us know what gross Absurdities may find Credit with the Ignorant, it would be very hard to imagine how any
Belief

Belief should be given to such an Impossibility, Transubstantiation it self being as conceivable a Thing, as that a Protestant, really of our Church, should be a Papist too; and any other Contradiction as easily reconciled as that.

Neither can they fairly object *Ignorance*, and an Implicite Belief to the Papists, who know so little the Constitution of the Protestant Religion, as not to see it in our Church; and who resign themselves to their Teachers so far, as with the same credulity to call our Church *Popish*, with which the *Papists* are taught to call it Heretical.

So Causeless, I hope, and Groundless will this mischievous Calumny appear to all those that shall consider; and all those who will be willing to consider, that do not wilfully chuse a Mistake so scandalously unjust to a great Reformed Church, and so destructive and ruinous to the whole Reformation. As therefore they would not be found ignorant of the Religion they profess; as they would not continue so highly Uncharitable to their Brethren; nor be guilty of the Ruine of what they would be thought so much to contend for; if there be in them any love of Truth, any care of Justice, any tenderness of Conscience, any concern for the Publick Cause and our Common Religion, let them think of these Things.

In the first place therefore, to begin with the Unreasonableness in general of this Jealousie wherewith some Men are prepossed: Who would not stand amazed to hear that Church stiled Popish, the Purity of whose Faith has been declared so expressly, so illustriously attested and spoken of through all the World? Know they, or care they what they say, that say this of a Church, that has solemnly and positively disowned all the Usurped Authority, and condemned all the false Doctrines of the *Roman* See, its Supremacy, Infallibility, Transubstantiation, Idolatry of the
Y 2 Angels

Angels and Saints, Purgatory, &c. That has not done this in a Corner, or in the Ear, but proclaimed it on the House top ; that like a City set upon a Hill, has been as high and eminent on the one side, as *Rome* it self, with its seven boasted Hills, has been on the other ; and has as remarkably opposed the Errors of that Church, as ever they had been advanced ? What a new wonder must this be to the World, to hear the Church constituted by *Cranmer* and *Ridly*, accused of Popery ; the Faith and Worship suspected to be unreformed, which was delivered down to us by those great Martyrs ? Is this the Reward of a Church, whose Sons have given so loud a Testimony against the *Roman*, in their Lives and by their Death ; who have still born the burden and heat of the Day ; who have felt the fiercest Rage of the Enemy, and have returned them the deadliest Wounds ; who have been foremost still in all Encounters, all along in the last Age, and in our own, the famous and the victorious Champions of the Protestant Cause ? If this Church, and these Men, after the Declaration made in our Articles, after repeated Subscriptions and Abrenunciations, after all this zealous opposition of Popery, must be yet suspected of Popery ; as well on the other side may the Decrees of the Council of *Trent* be said to comply with the Reformation, and the Pope himself be thought a Protestant.

One would imagine from the Suspensions of these Men that traduce us, that there was some small inconsiderable Difference betwixt the Papists and us ; something that might easily be reconciled ; not that we differ as much from them, and in as substantial Points, as those very Persons that complain. For let all the Harmony of Protestant Confessions be consulted, and see if we are not of the Harmony, and our Articles do not conspire with theirs ; if ours are not as express, and as directly opposite to the

the *Roman Church* ; if there can be any Hopes of Reconciling us, sooner than of Reconciling them.

For though there are of the Protestants that retain not some indifferent Ceremonies which we have ; (and that we might well do it you will see presently) yet it is to be supposed they would not stand out against the *Roman Church* on that account, if the rest were well agreed : If they could once allow their Transubstantiation, Idolatry of Images, &c. If they could endure their Superstitious Rites ; they would not stick at what might remain of a little ancient Order and received Decency ; and were that all, would as soon return to *Rome* as we.

Nothing can make an honest Man suspect our Church of Popery, but his Ignorance what Popery is. He may take all that to be Popish which the Papists do and believe ; and presume those guilty of their Superstitions, who do not dissent to their whole Creed, and are not Nonconformists to their whole Practice ; and in his Opinion the purest Church of the Reformation must be that which is most opposite to the Church of *Rome*. But he forgets then that the Church of *Rome* is Christian, still, though abominably corrupted ; that to run contrary to her in all things, must be to deny our God and Saviour ; that by this Rule we must lay aside their Scripture as well as their Traditions, and neither give Alms, Fast, nor pray, because it is the Practice of that Church. He considers not that an Anti-Papist is in a much worse condition than the Papist himself ; and that if we take what the Pope proposes in gross and together, it is infinitely more dangerous to reject all, than to admit it.

By Popery therefore can be meant nothing, but the Corruptions that Church has suffered, and the Usurpations it has advanced. For the Faith of that Church was once as fair spoken of as now its Errors are ; and had she continued in that Purity, we ought to have been of her Communion ; and now

we are to depart from her, no otherwise than she shall be found to have departed from her self, to have varied from the Truth, and to have corrupted the Doctrine that was once delivered from the Saints.

Now the Test whereby these Doctrines are to be examined, whether they are Popish (that is, corrupt), or no, is this, Whether or no they are Consonant to the Holy Scriptures. This being the common Principle and Touchstone with all Protestants, That nothing is to be believed or practised as necessary to Salvation, but what is contained in the Scripture ; and that nothing is to be believed or practised in any manner whatsoever, that is contrariant to it. A Principle that is delivered to us with the New Testament, by the first Ages that received and transmitted it. By this Test their Additional Traditionary Doctrines fall, their Infallibility proves the greatest Falsity, and their Illimited Jurisdiction is cut off; the number of the Sacraments is retrenched ; their Worship of the Host, of Images, Prayers to Saints, for those in Purgatory, or in an unknown Tongue are taken away ; whatever was imposed as necessary to Salvation, and had no Warrant from God's Word, or was otherwise proposed, and yet repugnant to it. Such Errors and Corruptions you will find marked out in our Book of Articles, and there distinctly condemned.

But though nothing is to be enjoined as necessary to Salvation, but what God himself, the Author of our Salvation, has declared ; yet we are not to think that no Circumstance is to be used in his Service, that he has not distinctly commanded : This being no Protestant Doctrine, but the greatest Falsity. For then no Action that is even of Necessity to be performed could be performed, had not God prescribed the Circumstance too : Whereas on the contrary, there cannot be a plainer Truth than this in the World, that

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he who orders an Action to be performed, and orders no Circumstance, must be supposed therefore to leave the choice of the Circumstance to Discretion. And it is as clear, that in such Cases, where in private we are left to our private Choice, there in publick, we are to be directed by the publick Discretion, the Election of the Superiours, provided always that in both Cases no Circumstance be used, that is contrary to the Intention of the Action, and the Will of God.

It was therefore in the Power of our Spiritual Governours after they had retrenched, what they were constrained to take away, all that was unlawfully believed or practised, Idolatrous, Superstitious, or Erroneous; to retain or reject as they should see Cause, all indifferent circumstantial Things; which as they were not commanded by God, so neither were they forbidden by him. Innumerable Ceremonies therefore they cut off: Some inseparable Companions of the Falsities and Superstitions they had abolished, some impertinent to the main Action, others choaking or incumbring it. And some too they left; so few, that they rather expected to be asked why no more; and those the freest from Offence, and the fittest to be retained. For they considered that an innocent useful Ceremony, which had either been laudably used before Popery came in, or was not proper to the Superstition to which it had been annexed when purged of that Superstition, was restored to its Innocence and Indifference, and might be used as lawfully now as in its first State. And therefore though they took the liberty to leave off several Rites however in themselves Innocent, and in use before Popery began, because they were of little Edification, yet they kept up others which appeared more necessary to the Church; and which at the same time might shew both their Temper and Moderation towards the Modern Roman, which they were forc'd to leave, and their respect to the Primitive, which they desired to imitate. And

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And with such a view as this, if you will look upon the Particulars for which we are accused, you will see how little of Popery (that is, Corruption or Superstition) there is to be found.

The Particulars in which we chiefly differ, are these: Government by Bishops, a Liturgy of some Ancient Prayers, Kneeling at the Communion, the Cross at Baptism, the Surplice, and the Observation of some Christian Fasts and Feasts.

1. *First*, Then as to Government by Bishops, had it been a thing purely indifferent, we might have lawfully retained it; and our Church might have taken leave to have chosen a sort of Aristocracy, as others have been pleased with a kind of Democracy. But take it as it is, intimated in the Writings of the Apostles, and manifestly of their Institution; we then had been obliged to reduce it, if the *Roman* Government had been *Presbyterian*. When we found it therefore there, what Reason had we to abolish it? Shall we allow the Pope so much Power as to make that unlawful by his Use, which the Apostles and their Disciples have recommended to us by theirs?

2. For our Liturgy of some Ancient Prayers, is it Popish as a set Form? Or as a Form of those Prayers? A Set Form is so expedient and necessary to the Church, if but for the sake of the People (that they may be sure to have no other Petitions suggested than what are fit, that their Devotion may not suffer by the Weakness or Indiscretion of the Minister, that they may know beforehand how to prepare their Thoughts, what frame of Spirit is to be brought to Church) that I may take leave to say, had a Set Form been used, not only in the Superstitions of *Rome*, but in the Charms of a Magician, it ought however to be used in the Service of God. If the
Papists,

Papists, if the Heathens used Set Forms, because it was the most certain, orderly and best considered Way, fittest for the Worship of a God; must we therefore be forbid? Because they did well, are we therefore to do worse? And so for the Prayers themselves, they are most of them elder than Popery, and no more Popish than the Lord's Prayer. And if there are any of their Composure; yet if they are good, and according to the Will of God, why may they not be offered to him by us, as well as by them? Nay, may they not be more acceptable to God, as they may be a Testimony how willing we would be to keep the Unity of his Church; and to joyn with all Christians, were we permitted, in all their Devotions? If our Accusers would shew us any Popery in our Prayers, they ought to shew us where we pray to any but God, or for any thing for which we want his Warrant; where we use any Intercession, but our Saviours; or what part of our *English* Language, is an unknown Tongue.

3^d. The Surplice is nothing but an Innocent Habit made of Linnen, which is appointed to be the Dress of the Priest when he Officiates. It cannot but be acknowledged, that it is a fit point of Decency to assign all that are in Orders some certain Fashion of Garment in Publick, if but in the Streets, and when they appear abroad. And if this be a Gown, and the Papists wear one too, is a Gown therefore Popish? In like manner as the Ministers of the Church are directed to an uniform Decency abroad; so particularly, and with the same innocent Intention they are ordered to wear a distinct Robe, when they perform the Publick Service in the Church: That as the common Devotion is administred by a Person set apart, in a Place and at a Time set apart, so it may be done too in a peculiar Garment. And if the Papists do so too, even so let them; they do well

well. If they had invented the Garment, we need not have Scrupled to follow this one *Italian* Fashion. But they took it up from earlier Custom, and it is no more Popery, than the Ministers, than the Citizens, the Lawyers, or the Judges Garments. If they could say we placed any Sanctity in it, attributed any Efficacy to it, it would be something; but as we use it, it may as well be a piece of Popery, to be at Church with a Band, or with a Crevat.

4. Kneeling at the Communion is so far too from being Popish; that is, either a Corruption or Superstition. The Papists indeed kneel to the Host, as to their God; but not so particularly then, when they receive it, as when immediately after Consecration, it is Elevated, and shewn to them for that purpose by the Priest. But we that Kneel when we receive the Communion, Kneel not *TO IT*, but *AT IT*. And what Posture can there be fitter for those, that in the deepest Sense of their own great Unworthiness, and of Gods unexpressible Mercy, are going to take the Seal of their Pardon, and the Pledge of their Salvation; What better Posture would they have for those, that at that time are to be in the Highest Acts of Devotion; the most relenting Contrition, and the greatest Thanksgiving? If on that Occasion the Papists Kneel to, and with a wrong Intention; why should any Fault of theirs hinder me from expressing my Duty? What they do on no Reason, why should not I do on the Best; especially when we have so solemnly disclaimed them, and so expressly declared our own? As we are not to disuse the Holy Sacrament, because the Papists have made it an Idol; so may we continue our Reverence, tho' they have paid it Adoration.

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5. The Cross in Baptism, or rather after Baptism, has in it as little of Popery too. To Worship the Cross, to ascribe any Virtue to the Sign, or to promise ones self any Defence from it, may be Popery; but to use it as a Sign, only to signify and declare, can never come under that Notion, nor be termed Superstition; no more than it would be to pronounce the Word. Tho' the Cross was *Foolishness to the Greeks, a Stumbling-block to the Jews*; and has been since to the *Papists* too, a Stumbling-block and an Idol; yet are we still to Glory in it, and to have the Memorial of it in an high and precious Esteem; neither concerned on one hand at the *Gentiles* Mockery, nor on the other at the *Roman* Superstition. The Primitive Christians, it is certain, us'd the Sign in the Earliest Times, very frequently: With that on all Occasions, they put themselves in Mind of our Saviours Suffering for them; and with that they arm'd themselves against their own. So they saluted their Brethren, and so they defied the Heathen. It was the common Token and Mark of those that belonged to Christ; and was afterwards the Imperial Banner of the Great *Constantine*, the first Christian Emperour, and under that (by the Grace of God) were those Victories obtained, that put an end to the Heathen Persecutions. Our first Reformers therefore finding the Cross of Christ made the Subject of much Superstition among the Romanists, its Image Worshipped, and I do not know what Virtue imputed to the Signs; and yet remembring withal, the Devout Practice of the first and best Ages; as they abhorred to Countenance the one, so they were tender too of Condemning the other: and in that Intention, after the Sacrament of Baptism is Administred, the Priest is Ordered, when he declares audibly the Admission of the Child into Christs Flock, to declare Visibly too by that known blessed Sign, what that Shame is, the Christian ought to despise, how
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he is openly always, and as it were on his Fore-head, to bear the Profession of his Faith, what that Banner is under which he is now Listed, and in what Warfare he stands engag'd. Our Church applying that to its Members once at least in their Lives, which the Primitive repeated so often; and doing that on so proper an Occasion, which heretofore had been done on all, in hopes of being excused on the part of the Ancient Christian, by its Care to avoid the Faulty Practice of the Papists; and in hopes of being justified to its Members and Brethren, by so great, and so reverend an Authority. And that it might be impossible for any Stander-by, how weak soever, to fall into any Superstition himself, or to suspect it in the Minister; he never uses the Action Dumb, but proclaims the Edifying Signification, and speaks out in plain Words the wholesome Meaning. A Sign this, Nobly and Generously taken up by the Elder Christians, in the midst of their Blaspheming Heathen Neighbours; owned now with the like Courage under the insulting *Mahumetan*: A Lesson as necessary for that part of Christendom, that confines now upon the *Turk*; not to be look'd upon as Unreasonable or Improper, by those Nations that by the Mercy of God, have yet a better Neighbourhood; always of great Edification to the Devout, but particularly to be remembered by those whom Commerce carries into remoter Countries; where tho', if Report mistake not, it has by some been most scandalously forgot. So clear and free is the Sign of the Cross, as used by us, from the least shadow of Superstition.

6. *Lastly*, The Fasts and Feasts of the Church comes as unjustly under the same groundless Imputation. The Time of Assembling, is a Circumstance of our Worship that cannot be left to particular Choice, but must be determined in Common; and
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what is to be done at that Time, must be determined too in an Ordinary, Orderly Assembly : So that it must be left to the Discretion of the Governours, when we are to keep a Festival, and when a Fast. As to the keeping of the Lord's Day, our Church was not at Liberty ; without she would have rashly departed from Apostolical Observation, and the continued Practice of all Ages and Places since the beginning of Christianity. As for the keeping of *Easter*, she was too under the like Obligation ; the Annual Feast of the Resurrection, the Great Lords Day, being known to have been the Chief, and the Cause of all the Weekly. And as to the Fast of Good Friday, it way nigh as early as the Feast of the Resurrection. They lamented their Sins our Saviour dyed for on the Friday before, as constantly as they commemorated His Rising again for our Salvation the Sunday after. And in Order to the keeping of those two Great Days with more Devotion, there was likewise in the Church some time beforehand set apart, for better Recollection, and greater Preparation : The number of Days in some Places more, in some less. That of Forty, no Superstitious Number, had obtained in the *Western* Country ; and therefore was still kept ; and would to God it were as Religiously observed, as it was Piously appointed. *Whitsunday* too, the Day on which the Holy Ghost descended, was Observed always, and Universally by the Ancient Church. Only the Nativity of our Saviour was of later remembrance, but yet before *Popery* came in : First observed in the *Western* Church, and afterwards taken taken up by the *Eastern*, in St. *Chrysostom's* Time, as it stands recommended by him to the People of *Antioch*. Other Times besides these, have been appointed too for our Religious Assemblies ; which besides the general Worship of God, the Examples of his Saints and Martyrs, are gratefully remembered

bred, and piously proposed, and those Days are called commonly by the Name of the Person then particularly Commemorated: Not that the Worship is to the Saint, or that the Day is employed in his Honour; only because on the Occasion of his Memory or Martyrdom, we come together as to pay our other Duties to our God, so to thank him for the Graces of his Servant, and to be edified and instructed by the Example. It is true the Church heretofore, when God had been bountiful to them in the Number of his Saints, increased in some Proportion those Days of his Worship; and it is to be Confessed, that *Popery* had both acknowledged Saints to God, which he might not own, and gave the True Saints an Honour which they must disclaim. But with us the number of those Days is not greater than that the Affairs of the World may well comply; and as the number of the Apostles is not large, so their Sanctity sure is unquestionable; and then on those Days we neither beseech by their Merits, nor recommend our selves to their Intercession. You see then how unreasonable the Objection of *Popery* is here too; but see to what Absurdity it goes on. First it is supposed *Popery*, to keep a Day in the Memory of an Apostle, and then it is thought as *Popish* to call him a Saint. A Great Person at *Geneva*, it seems, presumed it somewhat *Popish* to observe Sunday it self; and considered about changing the Day. Nay some are so perversly Superstitious on the other hand; as that That Day, on which all the Christian World remembers our Saviours *Bitter Passion*, has seemed to them the fitter for a Feast; and the Time Universally now set apart for the joyful Memory of his Blessed Nativity, the more proper for a Fast. This indeed is not like the *Papists*: No, it is like a *Jew* or a *Heathen*.

So I hope it has sufficiently appeared, how little guilty those Usages are of the *Popery* of which they
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are accused : The Chief Designs of these Papers. But having not been able to Discourse of their Innocence without some Discovery of their use, I shall crave the Readers Patience for a short Digression, wherein he may see that the first Governours of our Reformed Church did not only use their Liberty and impose them as things indifferent, but as things expedient, and to which they were obliged in all Godly Prudence.

For although the Persons who now enforce this account, may think so much of themselves, as that the weakest of their possible Jealousie ought to have been considered most; yet the first Reformers were not to engage themselves in a task so endless, nor to content themselves with so narrow a view; several other Respects more weighty, and things more practicable did expect their Care.

For in the Reformation there were more Considerations to be had, than some are pleased or capable to understand. There was a regard to Truth, to Increase of Piety, to Gravity, and Decency to Antiquity; To all the Modern Churches, the *Roman* it self, the *Grecian*, and the then Reformed; Regards then had, and ever since to be continued. They were indeed to provide in the first Place, that their prescribed Rites should be such as might not in any manner reasonably offend their own Members, but be the most fit to raise and promote their Devotion: They were too at the same time to take care, that no Offence should be given to other Churches, no just Scandal even to that they left.

For as to the Church of *Rome*, tho' we were forced to part from Her, it was to be with all Christian Meekness and Charity; with a desire that she would return to Her self and us; and would at last follow the Reformation, which she had been often desired to begin. And therefore when we cut off her Corruptions and Superstitions, we retained some
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of her most laudable and ancient Ways ; not leaving them tho' Godly and Venerable, because practised by Her, as the Spirit of Opposition would have directed ; but for that Cause the rather practising them our Selves, as it was fit for Christians and Brethren. All the Innocent Ceremonies indeed we did not keep, because their Number was excessively great, and they of small or no Edification. Tho' under that Burden we could have been content to rest, had that been the only Dispute, and were it to have been the Condition of our Peace. But the Tyranny of their Corruptions, by which they forc'd us out of their Communion, having restored us to our First Liberty, and taken off that Human Right, or Usurpation, by which their Bishops pretended Authority over Ours (from a Prescription whose Date we know); we used then that Liberty too in other Matters ; and both shewed that we were not under Bondage, and that we were in Charity ; leaving that Church a Pattern for Her to imitate, and Using towards her a Temper by which she was not needlessly provoked.

So did the first Reformers discharge their Duty towards the *Roman Church* : By this Conduct given to the Sober and Well-minded all reason to commend us, and taking away from the Rest all occasion to Blaspheme ; reducing themselves in all Material Points, to the Standard of the *Primitive Church* ; and in lesser Matters taking leave to vary, as several Countries then of the Same Age had used to do ; in Hopes that other Nations would by the Grace of God be at last invited by so fair an Example ; we not proposing our selves so much, as the ancient Church to their Imitation.

The same Apology might too, be satisfactory to the *Greek Church* ; from whom if we differ in Doctrines or Worship, it was because we presumed our selves constrained by the Truth so to do : But
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that we affected not wantonly an unnecessary Contrariety, they might perceive by our choosing some such Customs as had the general Approbation, and by conforming to ancient Usage. A Church of another Climate not being to expect that we of the *North-West* should agree in all; but that it might appear by common Practice of some Things, that it was not out of Opposition that we had abstained from the rest.

Such Respect there was to be to the *Roman* and *Greek* Churches: There was too a Consideration of the Reformed, the *Lutheran*, a chief Regard was to be had to her, and the upper Hand of Fellowship given as to the *Elder Sister*. She first had protested against the *Romish* Corruptions, stood the dangerous Shock of *Papal Tyranny*, and boldly advanced a Reformation; which too she Planted wide, and Settled in very powerful Countries. This noble Example our first Reformers follow'd: From them they learned to cast off all Modern Usurpation, and to restore according to the Earlier Pattern; not taking our Copy indeed from theirs, but from the same ancient Original, tho' with some Difference, yet with a near Resemblance. Our Episcopacy, by the Piety of our Princes, was left more entire than with them in some Places. The Doctrine of *Consubstantiation*, which determines the Mode of Christ's Real Presence at the Time of Participation, we were not satisfied in; but yet as they condemned the Idolatry and Superstitions of the *Popish Transubstantiation* equally with us; so did we equally with them Adore the Mystery of the Holy Sacrament, and were ready to Communicate on our Knees. After their Example our Churches and Cathedrals were not neglected, the Places where God's Honour dwells; nor His Altars, where His Mercy and Love shew themselves forth. The Worship of the Soul was commanded to be expressed in

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the Posture of the Body ; The Bowing at the Holy Name of *J E S U S* recommended, and a decent Gravity every where kept up, tho' with fewer Ceremonies.

So Serviceable were these Orders of ours in respect of the rest of *Christendom*, and so fit to be retained for their Edification in Love (the Fruit of which we had the Satisfaction to reap, not only from the Approbation of those our Brethren, not to well satisfied elsewhere, but from the Confession even of some *Romanists* themselves.) They were too as proper for our own Edification, and for the Advancement of God's Worship here.

To that purpose these Rules were as exactly fitted as if it had been the only Design. For what could have been better designed for the Honour of God, and Increase of Religion amongst Men, than that the People should be ordered (had it not been their Custom before) Solemnly to meet to pay their Devotions on certain Days of the Week ; that there should be Annual Commemorations of the Mysteries of our Redemption, and of the Zeal and Doctrines of the Blessed Apostles. And how could our Devotions be more Certain and Sufficient, more Grave and Regular, than under a well-considered Form ? If the Minister were then in another Garment, did not the very Sight of him Admonish, before the Exhortation began, that the People were to lay aside their ordinary Thoughts, not to meet him there as abroad, but to be a Holy Congregation ? If they were directed to be on their Knees at Prayers, and at the Communion, was it more than became their Duty, or a Hindrance think we to their Devotion ? Or was it to be expected, that when a Congregation saw a Person admitted into the Number, and the Doctrines of the Cross declared over him, as the Terms of his Reception ; they should be Offended that it was so evidently set

set forth, and declared to the Eye as well as to the Ear ; and should so far forget its Benefits, as rather at that Time to think impertinently of an old Superstition that was gone, and of Popery that was abolished, than to join and recognize our Saviour's Death, and their former Vows, and Zealously to resolve the Profession of their Holy Faith in Despight of all its Enemies ? But on this Subject I proceed no further to the other unquestionable Parts of our Ritual ; it being plain, that even the lesser Appointments have their proper Use.

When therefore the Reformation began, for such just Reasons, and several Respects to others, and to our selves, was the present Form Established.

At that time the other Protestant Church of *Calvin's Model* (that the Reader may not think it forgot above) was but just set up in the narrow Territory of *Geneva* ; and therefore, indeed, not much considered by our Reformers ; only under their general Rule, that as they begged leave in indifferent Things to use their own Liberty, so they imposed not on other Churches. By our leave therefore the Reformers of that Place might have used fewer Ceremonies, and those of their own Invention, so they would be pleased not to dictate their Regulations as necessary Rules to us : Nay, even there, where otherwise we might think they had gone too far, the necessity of their Circumstances might have pleaded for them, provided they prescribed not their Orders and Discipline to Foreign Countries. Tho' therefore they had abrogated Episcopacy, though Lay-Elders, and Lay-Deacons were Novelties in the Church of Christ, though a Liturgy of Prayers was wanting, and they seemed in several Things to condemn the Ancient Church too much, yet they were still regarded by us as Brethren, their Correspondence desired, and Communion with them, maintain'd.

But when the Neighbourhood of *Geneva* had, with the Doctrine of the Reformation, carried this peculiar Discipline into *France*, it began thence to come over hither as a Mode, and to take, it may be, the more because it was new. And then it was urged, not as convenient to the Circumstances of a little Town or of a scattered distressed People under Popish Bishops, but as necessary to all that professed the Purity of the Gospel; and it was given out to be as fit to reform from us to them, as it was before from the Pope to us. The first Rule of this new Method (I mean as imported and Translated to us) was, to have no Circumstance in Divine Worship, that was not expressly determined in Scripture. By this Rule they cut off all our Establishments, as they thought, at once; but by this they could have none of their own; for their Elders were not to be found in the Text, considered better; and unordained Annual Deacons had as little ground, not to mention their lesser Rites. That Rule therefore failing, they were to have another Measure of Purity; and that was, to be at the greatest possible Distance from the Church of *Rome*. And then we were to have no Bishops, because the Pope was one; we were not to pray to God at set Hours, or by a set Form, because the *Papists* did; we were to have no Christian Fasts or Feasts; and all our Observations, though never so Edifying and Primitive, were to be laid aside by those that would be pure, if they had been used at *Rome*.

We have already, though briefly, discovered the Falsity of both those Principles. The First was a gross Falacy put upon the People by their Teachers, who to the great Maxim of the Reformation, that no necessary Christian Doctrine was to be received nor warrantable by Scripture; had Sophistically joined this great Untruth, That no Circumstance of Worship was to be used that could not be shewed there.

there. The other too, that condemned indifferently all the Practices of the *Roman* Church whatever, was nothing else but a Sophistical Imposture put in the place of this Truth, That none of its Corruptions were to be retained ; it was nothing but a disingenuous, unchristian Abuse of good Peoples Zeal ; to make them dislike the good Usages of ours and the ancient Church, with the same warmth they rejected the Deprivation of the *Roman*.

Either of these two Principles, if they had been true, would have put an end to this Dispute about Church Ceremonies ; and therefore, though Baffled and Confuted, they failed not to be always inculcated into the Ears of the People. To prove the Rites of our Church unlawful Step by Step, had been a troublesome Task, and might not have succeeded well ; either the People might not have born the length of their Discourse, or seen through the Weakness. But here to cut the Work short, they had a Maxim or two that their Followers might easily grasp, and it may be as easily swallow. And accordingly one or both of these, the People were always taught to believe. These were the little Lumps of Leaven that were cast in, and all along fermented the Nation, till the whole was Leavened ; and they were worked up at last to the utmost Perfection, and most exalted State, to the Holy Covenant ; whose great Ends forsooth were, to pluck up Episcopacy Root and Branch as Popish, and to establish Presbytery, the Form of God's own Appointment.

But these false Principles could not be fixed so ; they were pursued by their own Party, and run down in Fact. For as to the first, there rose up those that could more spy out Presbyterianism in the Bible, then they had been suffered to see Episcopacy before : Ministry and Tythes were not to be found in the Gospel, they said, They asked you your Text for every thing you did ; for saying you rather than thou ;

for taking off the Hat before God or Man. And so as to the other Maxim, it was found out at last, that *Geneva* it self was not far from *Italy*; and Classes and Synods (who would have thought it?) were esteemed a little *Popish* too; if they valued themselves on their Distance from *Rome*, there werethose that could go farther than they. The Independents presently outwent them; these were outstripped by others; and at last the Quaker seemed before them all, but all Things moving Circularly, these last came very nigh to that Point on the one Side, from which they were most remote on the other; instead of one pretending Infallible Spirit, we had Legions; and all the Opposition to the Pope of *Rome* ended in this, that every Man was to be Pope himself.

These were the visible and palpable Absurdities, consequent to those two false Maxims; and those Maxims have been mentioned here upon occasion indeed of the *Geneva* Reformation; but with no design of undue Reflection. They being but Additions grafted on that way since it was brought into *England*, not natural nor proper to it, though with us too closely combined ridiculous Untruths of a destructive Nature, to be disclaimed and discountenanced by all sober Men.

However, our Foreign Brethren of that Constitution, as they design their Form of Government for themselves, and not for us, for a Bond of Peace and Discipline at home, and not to give Disturbance abroad; so they will, we do not question, give us leave to think so well of our own Way, as not to be willing to exchange it for any other, that may in Charity be allowed to stand on equal Terms, but will not we hope, pretend Advantage.

For Good Men, and who know the Grounds and Reasons of our Reformation, were at a loss, what the late Design might mean of bringing our Church nearer to the Protestants abroad (to those of our
Brethren

Brethren of *Calvin's* Way we suppose they intended) ; We hope the Intention was not to insinuate an unjust Reproach ; as if we had not the Amity and Affection for them which we ought ; did not rejoice in their Edification, or compassionate their Affliction ; but only this, to alter our Constitution into a nearer Resemblance with theirs : But if any of ours desired this for Amendment, as a farther Reformation and greater Perfection, it was because they were not pleased to consider their own Frame well : Nor could any honest Man of our Church, and who understood her right, have ever consented. And if the Design was only Political, (though the Policy appears not) yet why might it not be as fit for those Protestants to come nearer to us ? But, not to stand on such Terms, how could we have went nigher to the *Calvinist*, without departing from the *Lutheran* ? Our Church is already in the middle, and reaching out her Hands on either Side ; settled there long ago, by weighty Reason, and upon mature Deliberation ; for although the Word Protestant has been here at Home appropriated to a Party ; and the Reformed Church abroad has been still understood only for those of one Way : Yet every one knows that the *Lutheran* is the first Reformed ; and that the Term Protestant is only proper to them, and particularly to those only of the *German* Nation. This then is the first Fallacy endeavoured to be put upon the People ; that those to whom some of our Dissenters pretend a nearer Approach, are the only Reformed and Protestants in the World ; as if the *Lutheran* were not to be understood by his own Name. The other is this, that the *Calvinist* is so great, that the other deserves not to be mentioned : Whereas the other have still been the far greater Number, and the much more considerable. Our Trade indeed, makes us look into *Holland*, (where though the true *Calvinist* makes not aboye a third

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of the People); and our Fashions into *France*, (and would to God their Numbers encreased there); we speak much of *Switzerland*, and the *Lower Palatinate*; but we forget to take notice of the large Countries that are entirely of the other Profession; as *Denmark*, *Sweden*, the Dominions of the Elector of *Saxony*, and *Brandenburg*, of the Great House of *Lunenbourg*, and the many Imperial Cities. So that the Design mentioned before of coming near to the Reformation abroad, was nothing else but this; to perswade us to go farther from the Universal Church Primitive, from the major part of the Moderns Reformed, from our innocent Agreement with general Christianity, and from those of our selves who are much edified by our Present Constitution; to come nearer to those abroad, who (to speak in the fairest Language) are not better constituted than our selves, and to comply with those at Home, who are certainly neither the greater nor the best part of us; to give way to the falsest and most destructive Prejudice, opposite to all Catholick Agreement, and to Countenance and Encourage a most causeless and Seditious Separation.

But to return from this Digression: We have seen upon the View of the Particulars most in Question, no Popery in them, no Superstition nor Idolatry, no Favour nor Tendency to any of the *Roman* Corruptions; nothing in them that is not directed to the promoting of God's Honour, the raising of our Devotion, and the Teaching of our Duty; nothing but what either was in use before Popery took Place, or must be allowed commendable even in the Papists themselves.

And yet notwithstanding all the zealous Abhorrence our first Reformers had for Popery, declared by their Writings, and confirmed by the Testimony of their Deaths; notwithstanding the constant continued Professions of the same Faith still made by
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all that Officiate in the Church ; although all possible Care has been taken to prevent the Suspicion, and disavow all Popish Intention ; yet our Church is Popish, and we all Papists still : The grossest and the most inexcusable Calumny that ever was invented.

We have seen already to what *Sinfully Unjust.*
Ends this notorious Untruth was first devised by the Dissenting Party ; to widen the Separation, to fix Men in it, and to keep them at an irreconcilable Distance : But I cannot tell whether it had not been more excusable before God and Man to have separated upon no Reason, than upon one so scandalously false. They had then only been accountable for their departure, and forsaking us ; but now besides for all this Injustice which they have done us, and the Calumnies under which they have left us. For so under the Old Law, wherea Man might at Pleasure have put away his Wife ; and without Cause shewn ; yet if he had given occasion of Speech against her, and brought an evil Name upon her, had accused her to have been Corrupt ; he was then by the Judgment of the Elders to make Reparation by a Pecuniary Mulk, to suffer corporal Chastisement, and not to put her away for ever. If then those Persons had not in them that Brotherly Love, which should have made them desirous of our Company ; nor that Sence of their Duty to our common Father ; by which we are obliged to make our joynt appearance unto Him ; yet in common Justice they should have forbore their Slanders, and in Reverence to the God of Truth they should not have condemned us so rashly, in Matters that concern him. For seems it so small a Thing to any Man, especially to one that professes a more tender Sence of his Duty, to accuse one rashly and falsely before God and the World, of Superstitions, Abominations, and Idolatry, of perverting the Gospel of Christ,
and

and corrupting his Worship, of carrying the Souls of Men into Error and Sin, and endangering their eternal Salvations? Were this Scandal spoken of any single Priest, that had the Care of the smallest Parish, what sufficient Satisfaction could be made him? But when it is spoke of the Pastors and Teachers of a Great People, of the Constitution and Frame of a whole National Church, what amends shall be given them? For here the Consideration is not only of Disreputation and loss of Honour unjustly sustained, but of the horrible Mischiefs that have followed: Nor do those suffer so much, of whom the Scandal is said, as those do who credit and entertain it. The greatest Prejudice is not to us, but to those who on that Account are gone from us; who have been scared by it into Schism, and Faction; have been engaged in Uncharitableness, and the Breach of the Peace of God, the Unity of his Church, into Heats and Animosities, into Temporal and Spiritual Disobedience; who have been thence perverted into deadly Errors and Heresies, and hastning from us have run upon Rocks, and made Shipwrack of their Faith. These are the Damages of that wicked Scandal, to be estimated by the Hazard and Perdition of thousands of Souls: The Loss is to the Catholick Church, and to be answered for hereafter to the Great Shepherd. So big is this foul Slander of infinite Mischief: Tho' its single Guilt be so great, that it needs no Accumulation.

Judge not that ye be not Judged, says our Lord and Master: *And, who art thou that Judgeth anothers Servant?* Says his blessed Apostle. So unwarrantable and dangerous a Thing it is to pass a hasty peremptory Sentence, even upon our Fellows and Equals, in any Thing that relates to God: It is to Attempt upon his Authority, and Usurp his Seat. He then that passes a Sentence notoriously unjust, what is he to expect at the Day of the righteous Judgment of God?

God? *And, who art thou that so judgest not only anothers Servant, but thy own Superior, and whom the Great Master has commanded thee to obey?* If thy Slanders were against any foreign Sister Church of God, it were a high Breach of Charity, for which you ought to beg Pardon of Christendom: But to Calumniate maliciously ones own Church, and to charge her falsely with the highest Crimes; is a lie not only against those to whom you owe common Respect, but to whom you are to pay Duty and Subjection; it is as if you Blasphemed your Father or your Mother.

But to pass away from such sad Considerations, on which tho' the concerned should reflect very seriously; to conclude in the easiest and most favourable manner: Those that go this way to destroy our Reputation with the Vulgar, have not provided well for their own with intelligent Men, they will not after this be well able to make good their Pretences to much Knowledge, and their Profession of greater Zeal for Truth. For the difference betwixt us and Popery is so wide, that those who accuse us of it, except they excuse themselves by Ignorance, cannot be well allowed by the World to boast of Conscience and Integrity.

I cannot tell whether most of the Teachers are not directly guilty of this great Untruth: However, whether or no they preach it for positive Doctrine, yet this we are sure of; there is nothing more common with their Auditors: It is this Fancy that keeps them fast to their own Way, and gives them their greatest Aversion for us.

Some of the People indeed out of Ignorance are betrayed into this Slander: And yet there too the Ignorance is something too Gross, and too easie to be removed, than that it should qualifie the Fault much. They need for better Information but peruse our Articles of Religion which are very short;
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and look into our Prayers, a Book in every ones Hand; they need but come to those near Places, where the Law and their Duty calls them; and have Patience to hear their proper Teachers: And therefore even this their Ignorance is too much their Fault, to become their Defence.

But however this blind Zeal, and weak Ignorance of the People, if it shall be allowed in Plea for them, must it not then be charged upon those who have usurped the Care of them? Those who have unwarrantably, and in their own Wrong taken upon them their Instruction, are they not to answer for their culpable want of Knowledge? But how careful should they be that they do not beget these uncharitable Prejudices, nor dis-ingeniously cherish such Untruths, that they are not the Causes of that Weakness, and the Authors of their Ignorance?

From whence is it, that those People should be supposed to bring such Prejudices, but from the Discourses of their Meetings? Do they not there find Popery and our Church in a Breath? The Rites of that Church so mentioned as to include ours; and themselves flattered with the Title of True Protestants, to our Exclusion? If they do not there broadly call the Surplice a Rag of *Babylon*, or our Prayers the English Mass; yet are not will Worship, and Superstition, carnal Ordinances; and Idolatry spoken out on those Occasions? And the People given to understand by oblique Reflections, and peculiar Phrases, that there is as little Difference as they have heard Distinction?

Hence it comes to pass that the true bred Dissenter will no more come into our Church, than into a House of *Rimmon*: A Cathedral is a very Abomination. To be at Prayers, would be to be at Mass: And if you ask them their Exception at the Book, they thank God they have never look'd in't. They leave their Friends before they are buried

ried, they are so frightened at the Service that is to be said; as if the Parson in White were an Apparition. And when a Relation of theirs is to be Christned, tho' the Office be performed at Home, in no superstitious Place; yet they will not assist at that for which they came, and fly away from the Sign of the Cross as fast, as the Papists fancy evil Spirits do. Or if any of these upon Surprize or Mistake chance to be present at the Prayers; they take care to shew their Aversion by their Looks and Gesture; they put themselves streight in some cross Posture of Body, or Disposition of Mind: If the Minister calls to kneel, they will chuse to sit; and when the holy Words he pronounces speak the Worship of God, Praises or Prayers to him, they devoutly think of the Superstition or Ignorance of the Priest, and smile at the Folly of the rest. Such Prophanation do a great part of them take our Worship to be: And so fearful are they of partaking in it.

These are the ridiculous and truly ignorant Conceits of their better meaning Followers: Highly unjust tous, but most Scandalous to their own Teachers. But these absurd Fancies are not more Ridiculous, than the Pretences their Leaders draw from them: When they desire Allowances for the Weaknesses of those they have made so; and would have the Government on all Occasions to indulge such Errors as they shall be able to teach: Using the old known Method, instructing the People to fancy Grievances first, and then in their Name, but for their own Interest, importuning a Redress.

But these Leaders of the Party might consult better for the Weakness of their People, if they would try to cure it by better Information; and they might easily acquit themselves of the Guilt of Slandering our Church, by beginning to do her Right. Let them then for once come nearer the Reformed Churches

Churches abroad themselves, and own that to the World, which those have never scrupled to declare. Let them honestly tell their Congregations the plain Truth : That we Detest and Renounce the Popish Corruptions and Superstitions as much as they ; that the Belief and Doctrine of our Church is the same with theirs ; that the very few Ceremonies we have retained, have nothing of Sin or Abomination in them. Let them confess that a good devout Prayer is nevertheless so, for being provided before hand, or read out of a Book, or by one in White, and not in Black or Gray ; that if the People will but bring their Thoughts to Church as well prepared as the Words are, they will be heard most acceptably by their God. Let them own that there is no more harm in the Sign of the Cross made by the Hand, than in the Word that signifies it from the Mouth ; and that Men may be as innocently shewn one Way as another, what Thing they are not to be ashamed of. Let them acknowledge that there is no more Sin intended, in being on our Knees at the Communion, than there is in being truly penitent and humbly thankful. And lastly, to Sum up all, Let them but declare that a Christian of our Communion, who worships God as is prescribed him there, and believes and obeys the Doctrine there taught him, is by the Grace of Christ in the ordinary way of Salvation ; let them, I say, but publish this to those Numbers they have called together (and if they are Truths, in Conscience they are bound to do it;) they may then be heard to excuse themselves from the blind uncharitableness and unrighteous Slanders of their Auditors against a Church of Christ, so fam'd and so great a part of the Reformation.

Hitherto I have only represented the strange Injustice offered to our Church, an undeniable and demonstrable Injustice : Neither is it my Intention

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to speak of that Personal one, under which its Ministers have suffered besides. The ground indeed for such a Jealousie, is not impossible in Nature; but it is from the same want of Charity, that those Persons who are under the greatest Obligations of Conscience against Popery, must be thought its greatest Favourers. If in a Multitude one or two single Men may have been under the suspicion of having Apostatized; yet how does that affect the rest of the Body, who will be the first to disown and renounce them? Were the eleven remaining Apostles to be termed Traytors for *Judas*? Or is our Nation to be denominated from the few Malefactors of its number, which it punishes as soon as it discovers? We have of Church-men some too, it may be inclinable to the Separation: Why are not the Dissenters pleased too for their sakes, to think favourably of the whole; and to let us all be true Protestants on the one Side, by the same Reason we are Papists on the other? But is it not strange that those who have distinctly subscribed to the Articles of the Reformation, at each Degree in the University, at the Promotion to either Orders, at their Institution to any Preferment, who have publickly read and owned these Articles in their several Congregations, that those who have given all manner of assurances to the World, must be suspected still, and traduced by those that have yet given none, of whom we know not yet, if they themselves do, but at random and at large, of what profession of Religion they are? God pardon them their uncharitableness; and we are to thank them, that they have not made us *Jews* or *Mahumetans*.

It may have been enough to all honest Men, and truly Conscientious, to have shewn them the untruth of the Prejudice that has been raised against our Church, and the Iniquity

And Pernicious.

quity of the irreligious Slander : As they feared God, so they would be afraid to speak Evil falsely of a Church of Christ, and of the Service of their Maker ; nay, we might hope that such upon the first Reflection would be the more hasty and forward to return to our Communion, lest they should seem any longer to countenance so unjust and ungodly a Calumny. But they may be pleased to consider further, not only the Sinfulness, but the Mischief of the Action ; and that we are not so sensible of the Injustice done to our selves ; as of its ill Consequences, the Damage and Prejudice it brings on the Cause of God.

The Differences and Schisms that have happened in the Protestant Churches have, it is known, been very scandalous to the common Cause, and formed into an Argument against us. It is said by our Adversaries, that as soon as we fell from them, we fell from Unity and Order, and that the infinite folly of the following Separations, was but a Consequent natural to the first, That it was a Spirit of Pride and Opposition that engaged us first in the Schism ; and that we had no Bowels for the Divisions of the Church. See therefore, say they, how they break into endless Factions ; they are no more tender of their own Communion, than they were of ours ; they part out of Humour and Fancy, and in this they do us right, they submit to no other Constitution.

It is true, that the wantonness and petulance of Men has given too much place to this Reproach already ; but when the measure of a thorough Reformation shall be the utmost Opposition to *Rome*, and a Protestant Church quarrelled and reputed *Papist* for some common innocent Usages ; then it is that the *Romish* Advocates may triumph well, then may they justly insult. Here, say they, you discover the right Protestant Temper ; you may see in the

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true Protestant, and the true Reformed, the true Spirit of Contradiction : How upon a Pique to us, they fall out with all *Christendom* ; and will leave the Churches of all Ages for our sakes : Let us but use what is Primitive or Orderly, and we may have them as Indecent, Confused, and Ridiculous as we please.

For the truth is, the Principle those Men have chose, does not only scandalously condemn the Churches of the Second and Third Ages ; but it is the most inconvenient that could be imagined, and may bring them into as great Absurdities, as they endeavour to avoid. From this Maxim the Church of *Rome* may take its Measures, and manage if they please the humour of Opposition, as easily as a Vow of Obedience ; it is but their taking one Side, and our Sectaries are bound to take the other Side, they are to be led by Contraries, and out of a childish crossness will refuse, what the other would seem to direct. So may the *Romanist* appropriate to himself all Gravity, Decency, and Antiquity : And should he reform, may he not expect that these would quit the Reformation.

This is the direct tendency of the Principle ; and this way it goes, though the Papist may not think fit to follow it : However we have seen what occasion of Obloquy and Reproach it gives, and what a Disparagement and Dis-reputation it brings on the Cause of the Reformation : Shameful to our selves, and an Offence to those that otherwise might come to us. We may now see in the next Place, how it operates by the Odium it fastens on our Church, and what Mischief it produces there ; how Convenient and Serviceable the Scandal is to the Designs of *Rome*, if not invented, yet fomented by them, and it self therefore to be esteemed *Popish*, for much better Reason than our Ceremonies have been.

For after the Reformation was, by the Grace of God once brought about, and the Church of *Rome* could not hinder her Corruption from being seen, and her Usurpation from being laid open; all that they in their Craft could devise, or the Malice of the Devil could have suggested, was to divide and dis-unite those that were gone away, and to promote Variance and Disagreement between us. But the Design was never more Artificial, than when they were able to raise a Jealousie, that one part of this Reformation was *Popish* still; and could make Men overlook all the substantial difference of this Church from that of *Rome*, and conclude them the same, only from the common use of some indifferent Things. The Church of *England*, they found, had manifested their Deprivations, exposed them beyond any Defence, and raised up a fixed and resolute Indignation against them. This Zeal, as long as it was Sober, Rational, and well Grounded, they could not possibly withstand: They try therefore whether they cannot divert it upon something else, and direct it against its own Party; whether they cannot take this Artillery, turn it upon something Laudable and Innocent, and level it against its Friends. Being hatred to Popery is unavoidable, let the *English* Church be *Popish* too. So, are the *Romanists* content, if we may come in for a share of the Guilt, that not only part of their Worship, but the whole may be reputed Corrupt; and they are ready to help to accuse themselves in the wrong Place, that the Charge may fall upon those that are in the Right.

And now the *Romish* Emissaries have accomplished their Errand in one Sense. If they have not perverted those of our Communion, yet they have seduced others to believe it done; and we are become all *Papists*; at least in the Opinion of the Dissenter. If

he may be believed, and we are to be added to the number, the *Roman* Catholicks are vastly encreased ; and well may they have the Reputation abroad, to be very considerable in their Country ; at least well may their Priests report that we are inclinable to return, and easie to be reconciled ; when they have the concurring Testimony for it of the Sectary, their seeming Adversary ; and this, though but a Mistake and Fame, yet has its Effect : It keeps up the hope of the Principals at *Rome*, and redoubles the endeavours of their Seminaries. But they have too a more certain and real Aim.

For by this Opinion they may either gain some of us to themselves ; or be sure however by the Jealousie, to keep us asunder one from another. They may hope that some, even of our Communion, may at last have a more favourable Esteem of the Religion, to which they have been joyned so long by Report ; and that here, as it happens sometimes in Marriage, we may be content to embrace that Faith to which Fame has said we were contracted before. But to the Honour of our Church be it spoken, this has not been affected neither by the Carresses of one, nor Affronts of the other ; neither out of Affection, nor Indignation. So little Tendency is there in our Constitution that way, of which we have been unreasonably suspected. Their great Hopes, I suppose, of this kind are upon the Party that pretends to be most averse, and makes at present the more clamorous and extravagant Opposition ; for it may be rational to presume, that he that knows not the Reasons nor Intent of the Reformation, and makes nothing of the vast Difference between us and *Rome*, may easily therefore step over it, and be as willing to return to them as us ; it may be enough to make such a Convert, to satisfy him in the sign of the Cross, or kneeling at the Communion, as soon as he finds himself convinced of the Lawfulness

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fulness of that Popery, he may be willing to yield to the rest, and may comply as undiscerningly as before he abhorred. Such an Intention as this, we may see is feasible enough; how far it has been practised in Fact, I will not say, or whether the *Quakers* have not been justly suspected.

For making of Profelytes the *Romanists* cannot have a more proper Method, than to infect the People with Prejudices against us, and to hinder them from settling on the true certain Bottom, the Foundation so well laid by the first Reformers, from keeping in that Church which is so sure a place, and may be so easily maintained. However, besides the Converts they gain, by the Jealousies they infuse, they heighten our Divisions and Animosities, break and scatter us; they hinder us from joyning in what might oppose them, and prevail that we have no common Interest. Nay, things have been sometimes brought to that pass, that the Sectarians have rather joyned with the Papists themselves, and in publick Counsels confederated with their pretended Enemies, to impeach our better Establishment. So much Popish were we then, that the professed *Roman Catholick* was less.

And now by force of this accursed Scandal, see into what Difficulty the Church is brought; either engaged in a perpetual, intestine Quarrel if she stands as she is, or else obliged to change at the Pleasure, and by the Direction of her sworn Enemies. If she thinks fit to stand on her own Bottom, where so many good and necessary Considerations have fixed her, and where she has rested so long; she must then expect the Countenance of all the Dissenting Out-cries; nay, want of Moderation reproached, and the Schism imputed to her, even by some of her own Popular Sons. If she shall be inclinable to comply, where she lawfully may, yet there the humorous Exceptions are so various and so

unreasonable, that she sees no good Issue; has no reason to presume that the Faction desires to be content; neither can she tell what Church she shall be at last, if she is to alter still, as often as her Establishments shall be accused to correspond with *Rome*.

Now the Church of *Rome*, which has fixed her self invariably upon the Council of *Trent*, and for the same reason would have its Adversaries unsettled still; most willingly sees us alter, shift and change; not only that the Uneasiness, Inconstancy, and Uncertainty may be verified upon us, with which they sometime Reproach us; that ours may be still wavering and more easily drawn to them; and that theirs may be unwilling to come to us, into a Body so mutable, and after a whole Age so little satisfied of the lawfulness of its Rites and Usages; but in hopes too, nay, out of certain Prospect, that by such Changes we shall be further from Settlement than before, and nearer to the Dissolution they would endeavour.

The demanded Alterations it is plain, are not for the Satisfaction of those that are of our Communion; but of those that are not: And by such our own may be scandalized and shaken; but the others will hardly be obliged. For when we are ready to change, not moved by Arguments and Reason, (for those are most Frivolous and Sophistical) but to comply with Fancy, or gratify Opposition; the Humour it is certain, will be the more hard to satisfy; and Obstinacy, when encouraged, will only learn to ask more, especially when the Principle by which they move, is full of endless Dissatisfaction, and has an equal quarrel against the whole Constitution. So that when they have effected one Alteration, they have only made way for another; and are never like to rest, till they have destroyed the whole. Now for Example, The Surplice, the Cross, and Kneeling at the Sacrament, are demanded to

be released : The particular Objections against them are quite out of Countenance, and no longer pressed ; only that General one of Popery, or a General scrupulous Fancy and Humour which they call Conscience, are now urged. It is evident then, that it is as easy a matter for the same Masters of these Scruples to teach their Auditors, for as worthy Reasons, to be dissatisfied with more : And it is as plain that they have already taught them a general Averſion. Should they be excused Kneeling at the Sacrament themselves ; might it not then be a great Offence to see the Minister, or any other kneel ? As now they pretend an Offence at the Sign of the Croſs, tho' they themselves look only on. Would they not think themselves obliged to avoid the very Sight, and ſeparate from the Communion of that popiſh Practice ? Is, think ye, the Conſecration Prayer free from all Suſpicion ? The Reverence preſcribed in handling of the Elements, may come near the Idolatry of the Hoſt ; and the whole Service accused for the Maſs. Is the Croſs after Baptiſm mentioned by them, becauſe they have forgot their quarrel at God-Fathers ; and have a better Opinion of the Office of Confirmation ? The Gown may as well be diſputed as the Surplice : Epiſcopal Orders may be thought a very indifferent Thing : And are they content enough with the Rank of Biſhops themselves ? The whole Form of Prayers has its Faults, and how many are there for no Form at all ? So that it is evident thoſe Things are rather asked to begin, and break Ground for further Approaches : There are neither better Reasons, nor is there more Contrariety againſt them, than againſt the other parts of our Conſtitution : Only theſe three Circumſtantials are moſt viſible, the one upon the Miniſter, and the other at either of the Sacraments ; and ſo may be ſignal enough for a diſſenting Triumph, a preſent eaſe to their
Scruples,

Scruples, which they will please to accept, in earnest of what is to follow.

Were there any just Reason for the Scruple of the meanest Person, or inconsiderable Number, God forbid but the Church should give Redress. And could it have been presumed that the Schism would be healed by the removing of those three Ceremonies; however innocent and edifying, they would no doubt have been remitted long ago. But the Governours of the Church know well what the Spirit and Genius of the Dissent is; and to what it drives; upon what Causes it is founded, and the medley of the Persons that are engaged in it; How small a Part the sincerely Scrupulous make, and how the Harmless are in the Hands of the Crafty, and the Weak managed by the Sturdy: That the prevailing governing Party are not to be satisfied with a Ceremony or two, but with more substantial Things; Nay, that Religion it self is but a Circumstance to their other Designs. This our Superiours know; who want not the Charity or Condescension that any Reconciler would recommend; but are obliged in all holy Prudence, and their Duty to the Church, to take in more Considerations, than perchance a private Writer may comprehend. They are to be as innocent as Doves, but as wise as the Serpents themselves. But this is beyond the Design of this Paragraph, the Scope of which is only this, That if Things are but indifferently well, to change is always extreme inconvenient, but then most especially when there will be no probable stop: That the Papist will be as well pleased with such Alterations as the Dissenter; and neither fully satisfied but with our total Abolition.

So is a Change, tho' in Things perfectly Indifferent, no indifferent Thing. But all Things called indifferent are not of equal Indifference; and particularly the change, this Maxim, we are speaking

Of, would perswade, which the Dissenters endeavour, and our Popish Adversaries wish, is still for the worse. The one pretends to see Popery in our Government and Rituals; the other with Grief sees ancient Order, and approved Decency retained; and the Primitive Church restored; They are sensible with what Disadvantage they encounter us; that here is no Novelty to reproach; and that the Truly Catholick Church is of our Side. They have a Church in their Sight, as it were one of the first Ages revived; upbraiding them by its Presence, and discovering the Counterfeit by the Comparison. To disorder and confound this, is the Folly of the one Party, and the Interest of the other; to drive us off from the Ground, on which we stand with so much Advantage; to take away from her all Order and Beauty; and to strip her of all the Marks of Antiquity, and Badges of Catholick Agreement. So shall we be that which the Enemies of our Church desire; their Scorn and Mockery first, and afterwards their easie Prey: While having our Eyes only upon *Rome*, and running still backwards from her, we fall into the Snare that she has laid behind us.

It were to be wished, that those who are so jealous of our Symbolizing with *Rome* in indifferent Things, would be as cautious in joining with her in her pernicious Designs, and conspiring to the Ruin of the Reformation. If they will take their Measures in Opposition to Popery, let them then close with that Church which is most hated by the Pope, and come in and help to defend that Place, against which he bends his greatest Force. And let them take care, least, if they know Popery so little now, as to accuse us of it, they assist not that Religion so long and so effectually, till they bring it in indeed, and learn what it is by a dear Experiment.

A
DISCOURSE
 CONCERNING
 The Inventions of Men
 IN THE
 Worship of G O D.

THE INTRODUCTION.

OUR Blessed Saviour has taught us, That there are some Ways of Worshipping God, which have so great a Mixture of *Humane Invention* in them, that they are *Vain* and Unacceptable to Him, *Mark vii. 7. In vain (saith He) do they Worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* This obligeth every Man who has a concern for his Soul, to examine carefully the Worship he offers to God, whether it be such as God has Instituted; lest his Service should be rejected with that Censure in the Prophet, *Who has required this at your Hands?* But more especially it concerns the Pastors of the Church, who have the Direction of the Publick Worship of God, to be careful in Examining this Matter, that they may be able to satisfy their own Consciences, as well as the Peoples committed to their Charge, concerning the Purity

Purity of the Worship which they practise Themselves, and recommend to Others.

II. It has pleased God, in his Providence, to make Me an Overseer over some part of his Flock in this Kingdom; and I look upon it to be my Duty, to use my Endeavours to Instruct Those that are committed to my Charge, in the Worship of God, according to the Rules He has prescribed; and to Warn such as I conceive to swerve from them, of their Mistakes. I hope it will be of Use and Satisfaction to Those that join with Me in the Publick Worship of God, to find, on Examination, That what they there Practise, is agreeable to God's Institution. And as to those that think otherwise, I persuade my self, That an Admonition in the Spirit of Meekness can give them no just Offence, but rather be of Use to them also, by obliging them to Examine and Revise their Ways, that they may Correct their Judgments, if, from what I offer, they shall see Reason for it.

III. In order to help those concerned to make a true and impartial Judgment in these Matters, I desire them to consider,

1st. *That it belongs only to God, to give Rules how He will be Worshipped.* This, I suppose, will be granted by All, since it seems to be a Truth naturally implanted in the Minds of Men, and universally acknowledged in all Times.

2^{dly}, I take it for a Truth, agreed to by the Generality of Protestants, *That the Holy Scriptures contain the Revelation of God's Will concerning his Worship.*

3^{dly}. From these Two, we may reasonably infer, That it concerns us to keep as close as we can to those Directions which God has been pleas'd to afford us in his Word, without Adding to, Omitting, or Altering any thing that He has there laid down. For, since God has vouchsafed us a certain Direction for his Worship in the Holy Scriptures, it is to be

be supposed, that all Ways of Worship are displeasing to Him, that are not expressly contained or warranted by Examples of Holy Men mention'd therein.

4thly. We must observe, That the Worship of God is either Inward or Outward. The Inward Worship of God, consists in the Inward Homage and Subjection of our Minds to Him. The Outward, consists of such Acts and Duties as serve to express this Inward Subjection of our Souls; or that promote, encrease, or contribute towards it. Thus, for Instance, Vocal Prayer is a Part of Outward Worship, because it expresses the inward Dependance of our Souls on God. Thus, Reading the Word of God, is a Part of the same; because therein we acknowledge our Subjection to Him, and to his Laws, and use it as a Means to promote and encrease this Subjection. Thus, Celebration of the Sacraments, is a Part of the same Worship, because in them we not only express our Dependance on God for his Grace, but likewise oblige and bind our selves to serve Him. And the same holds in all outward Acts of Worship.

5thly. We must remember, That 'tis in these outward Acts that we are more immediately concern'd as publick Worshippers; for we cannot know the inward Worship which Men pay to God in their Minds, but as it appears to us by these outward Acts: And generally, when we speak of the publick Worship of God, we mean this outward; and concerning it, are the great Disputes and Differences among us; all of us being agreed as to the inward, and of what sort that ought to be.

IV. Having premised these few Things, which, I hope, will be granted by all, I shall proceed directly to my proposed Undertaking; and shall, with the greatest Fairness and Impartiality I can, examine and compare the Worship of God, which is directed
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and warranted by Scripture, as well with that which is prescrib'd and practis'd by our Church, as with that which is practis'd by such as differ from us.

V. Now, if we consider the ordinary Service of God, as prescrib'd and practis'd in Scripture, we shall find the main substantial Parts of it to be these Five, (*viz.*)

Praises,
Prayers,
Hearing,
Bodily Worship : And,
Celebration of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Method I shall take in Discoursing of each of these, shall be,

First, To shew what the Holy Scriptures direct concerning them particularly.

Secondly, I shall consider the Practice of our Church with relation to those Directions and Examples, And,

Thirdly, The Practice of Protestant Dissenters.

CHAP. I.

OF PRAISES.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning them.

I. **F**irst then, As to the *Praises* of God, the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments require the Use of the *Psalms*, in offering up Praises

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Praises to God. We find in the Old Testament, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. *Hezekiah the King, and the Princes, commanded the Levites to sing Praises to the Lord with the Words of David, and of Asaph; and they sang with Gladness.* This Command of Hezekiah proceeded from God, and was approved by Him. The same way of Praising God continued in the Jewish Church till our Saviour's Time: And after that, we have yet a more positive Command for the Use of them by the Apostle, Ephes. v. 19. *Speaking to your selves in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.* And Col. iii. 16. *Let the Words of Christ dwell in you richly, in all Wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs; singing, and making Melody, with Grace in your Hearts, to the Lord.* I think there is no room to doubt, but by the *Psalms, &c.* in these Places, is meant the *Book of Psalms*, which the Holy Ghost has left for this purpose to the Church.

II. Though the Scriptures recommend to us *Singing* of Psalms, yet in some Cases they *allow* us to *Say* them. I will not insist on these Places of Scripture that seem to *require* us to do so, (such as Psal. cxviii. 2. *Let Israel now say, that his Mercy endureth for ever: Let the House of Aaron now say, and let them that fear the Lord now say, &c.*) because these Expressions being Poetical, may be so interpreted, as to mean *Singing*, though there is no Necessity of restraining the general Command of *Saying* or *Speaking* the Praises of God to *Singing* only. We find in Scripture several sacred Hymns; particularly of *Hannah*, the Blessed Virgin, *Zacharias*, and *Simeon*, and the Saints in Heaven, Rev. vii. 12. and xi. 17. which are said to have been *Said* by them respectively; and the Circumstances in the Story do not make it probable that they were Sung. From all which we may reasonably infer, That where People can Sing, they are obliged to do it, in Obedience to
God's

God's Command : But where, through any Defect of Nature or Art, they cannot *Sing* decently, they may be dispensed with *Saying*. Only People ought not, by this Indulgence, to be encouraged to neglect *Singing* altogether ; or to think that God doth not require it of them, when by a little Pains or Industry, they may attain to the Art of decently performing it in his Service.

III. 'Tis certain, the Word of God recommendeth to us *Psalms* and *Hymns* in *Prose*, for our praising God. If we look into the Songs of the Blessed Virgin, of *Zacharias*, or *Simeon*, we shall find them all in *Prose* ; and such are the Songs of the Blessed, which they are represented Singing in the *Revelations*, particularly, *Chap. v. 9. & xv. 3.* As to the *Hebrew Psalms*, 'tis evident that they are Poetical ; but the Poetry of them consists rather in the Style and manner of Expression, than in any certain Measures or Verses ; which those that have searched most narrowly into them, have yet been able to discover, so as to satisfy an indifferent Reader. But whatever Poetry there may be in them, we cannot find by any of the ancient Translations which were made use of by the Church, in our Saviour's, or his Apostle's time, or in the Ages immediately following, that they or the first Christians did sing any thing in *Verse* ; but we are sure that they sung Hymns in *Prose* : So that we have no certain Scriptural Warrant for the use of *Verse* or *Metre* in the praises of God.

Perhaps some may fancy that *Verse* or *Measure* was not in use in those Countries, and that therefore they sung their Songs in *Prose* : But this is a Mistake ; Poetry and Verses were then in those Places where the *Psalms* were translated, in great Request ; and at the highest Perfection, when the New Testament was penn'd, and yet we have no Example therein of their Use in the Praises of God.

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And it is very manifest that this proceeded from Choice, not Necessity : For if the Holy Ghost had thought Verse necessary for Divine Psalms, we may presume he would have inspired some of the Holy Men in Scripture, when extraordinary Gifts were so common, either to translate the *Psalms* of the Old Testament into Verse, or else to compose some of the other Hymns that are recorded in the New, after that way : But neither of these having been done, 'tis at least a Presumption that we may praise God as acceptably in Prose as in Verse.

And there is one Thing further to be considered, That the Prophets of the Heathen, who pretended to be inspired, generally wrote their Prophecies and their Hymns to their Gods, in Verse : We know not but this may be one Reason why the Holy Ghost thought fit that such as were inspired by Him, should decline that way of recording their Prophecies or Praises.

IV. As the Scriptures prescribe us the Use of Psalms in the Praises of God, so they encourage us to offer those Praises by way of *Responses*, or *Answering* : For this we have the best Examples that can be desired, even the blessed Angels and glorified Saints : So *Isa. vi. 3.* *And one cried unto another, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts.* And the Church Triumphant through the whole *Revelation* is (I think) constantly represented praising God after this manner. So *chap. vii. 9.* where *The Multitude*, that represent the People, *cried out with a loud Voice, (ver. 10.) Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb.* And then, *The Angels and Elders*, who represent the Clergy, perform their Part, (*ver. 12.*) saying, *Amen ; Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdom, and Thanksgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God.*

They are represented the same way answering one another, *chap. xix. 1.* *I heard a great Voice of much People*

People in Heaven, saying, *Allelujah*; this they repeat, (ver. 3.) Then the *Twenty four Elders* (representing, as before, the Clergy) answer ver. 4.) *Amen. Allelujah.* Then (ver. 5.) a Voice came out of the Throne, saying, *Praise our God.* Upon which (ver. 6.) the People resume their part, and answer, *Allelujah: for the Lord Omnipotent reigns.* I make no question but this is taken, by Allusion, from the manner of the Church's praising God on Earth; and there is nothing in it but what is agreeable to St. Paul's Command, of *Teaching and Admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs*; which supposes every one to have share in them, either by turns, or bearing a part.

It is observable, that the *Psalms* contain many excellent Instructions and Exhortations, as well as Praises and Prayers; and therefore St. Paul recommends them to Christians, for their mutual Instruction and Admonition. It was common therefore for one to sing, and the rest to hearken to their Instruction and Edification, as appears, 1 Cor. xiv. 31. *For ye may all prophesie one by one, that all may learn and be comforted.* Prophesying here (as we may find from the 26th Verse of this Chapter) includes *Psalms*, as well as *Doctrines, Tongues, Revelations, and Interpretations*; and the praising God *one by one*, or by turns, amounts to praising Him by way of Responses or Answering; and though these Prophets were inspired, yet it is plain they acted in this according to the settled Order of the Church, ver. 33. *As in all the Churches of the Saints*; and these inspired Prophets thus praising God *one by one*, is an unquestionable Precedent that God approves this Way in his Praises.

This Way of praising God by answering one another, is the most ancient we find in Scripture. For thus *Miriam* praised God, *Exod. xv. 21.* *And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath Triumphed gloriously, &c.* And the last Song recorded in

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Scripture is of the same Sort, *Rev. xix.* as is before-mention'd.

I reckon the Songs with which the Women of *Israel* received *Saul*, *1 Sam. xviii. 7.* to be Religious, and there it is expressly said, That *they answered one another* : And *Chap. xxi. 11.* *Did they not sing one to another ?* &c. But whether these Songs were Religious or no, it is certain that the Frame and Composition of some *Psalms* are such, as plainly discover that they were designed to be sung in Parts, and as much is owned by the best Commentators ; such are the *xxivth* and *cxviiith* *Psalms*.

It is to be observed, that the Law of *Moses* neither prescribes *Psalms* in the Praises of God, nor Singers, nor the Way of Singing : These all therefore are Parts of natural Religion, and indeed antienter than the Law, as appears by *Exod. xv.* What therefore we find in the Old Testament concerning these, is either from the immediate Prescriptions and Revelations of God by his Prophets, or from the Dictates of Nature, and not any part of the Ceremonial Law. And 'tis obvious, that natural Necessity will teach any considering Man this Way of alternate Singing, or answering in Parts ; for if the Songs be long, as some of the *Psalms* are, no one Man's Voice can hold out to the end.

V. The Holy Scriptures recommend to us the Use of Instruments in the Praises of God ; the *Psalmist* frequently uses and recommends them, and the whole Book of *Psalms* is concluded with this Advice, *Psal. cl. 3.* *Praise him with Timbrel, praise him with stringed Instruments and Organs, &c.* Thus Religious Persons were taught to praise God, before the Law, *Exod. xv. 20.* *And Miriam the Prophetess, the Sister of Aaron, took a Timbrel in her hand ; and all the Women went out after her with Timbrels, &c.* And thus the blessed in Heaven are represented praising God, *Rev. v. 8. & xiv. 2.* The Writers

of the New Testament recommend to us the *Psalms* which were the Hymns of the Jewish Church, and command us to sing them; and 'tis observable, that the word we render *Sing*, Jam. v. 13. Originally implies *singing with an Instrument*. Now if they had not approved the Jewish way of singing them, which was with Instruments, they would not have used a word that imported it; nay, it is not to be doubted, but they would have caution'd us against it; but the Use of Instruments (as I have shewed before in the Case of *Miriam*) being no part of the Ceremonial Law, but antecedent to it, ought not to cease, without some Command or Precept condemning it.

VI. Lastly, The Scripture requires that we understand the Praises we sing to God; and this warrants our Translating them into the vulgar Tongue: It is a Duty therefore incumbent on the Governours of the Church, to procure the *Psalms* to be translated for the Use of the People under their Charge; and they may expect the Assistance of God's Spirit when they attempt it, in Obedience to his Command. But if, through humane Frailty, any Mistake, not contrary to Faith, should creep in; this ought to be no Exception against the Use of the Translation, since there are such Mistakes both in the *Syriack*, *Greek* and *Latin* Translations, some of which are of great Antiquity, and were used by our Saviour himself, and his Apostles.

These are the Directions the Scriptures give us for the Performance of this first part of the Worship of God, which consists in Praises, and the Manner we find them offer'd to him by his Saints.

S E C T. II.

The Manner of Praising God Publickly, which is Prescribed and Practised by our Church.

NOW as to the Manner of offering *Praises* in our Church, it is to be considered.

1. That we are directed to Praise, Glorifie, and Confess to God every Day, in a certain number of *Psalms* of his own Appointment, out of the Old Testament; and then in such Hymns as are recorded in the New: And to these there are added such other Hymns, Confessions of Faith, and Thanksgivings, as will appear by and by, to be agreeable to the general Directions of Scripture.

But inasmuch as the Mystery of the Holy Trinity is more explicitly reveal'd to us under the Gospel, than it was to those under the Law; Therefore our Church has thought fit to require us with every *Psalm* and *Hymn*, to intermix, *Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the Beginning, is now, and ever shall be: To signify*, that we believe that the same God was worshipped by them as by us; the same God that is glorified in the *Psalms*, having been from the Beginning *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, as well as now: So that our ascribing this Glory expressly to the Three Persons in whose Name we are Baptized, ought not to be taxed as any real Addition to the *Psalms*, it being only used as a necessary Expedient to turn the *Jewish Psalms* into *Christian Hymns*, and to fit them for the Use of the Church now, as they were before for the Use of the Synagogue; which Practice, I presume, can give cause of Exception to none but *Socinians*.

2. Our Church orders these *Psalms* to be either *Sung* or *Said*, as the People are able to offer them;

not being willing to lay a greater Restraint on them than the Scripture has done : In which (as I have already shewn) we have Examples for both these Ways of praising God.

3. They are proposed to us in Prose, without any other Alteration from the Original, than what was necessary to make them intelligible in our Language.

4. The People are allowed to bear their Part in them, and either to Sing or Say them, by way of Answering : This is according to the Scripture Examples ; but it is not imposed, except in very few Cases.

5. Our Church permitteth the Use of some grave Musical Instruments to regulate the Voices of those that Sing, and to stir up their Affections, which are the natural Effects of Musick, and seem more requisite in Northern Countries, where generally People's Voices are more harsh and untuneable than in other Places ; but this is not imposed in any Congregation, nor doth any Rule of our Church require it, and therefore it is at the People's Choice, whether they will use the help of these Instruments or no.

6. This then is the Care our Church has taken, for the publick Performance of the Praises of God : And if we bring Grace in our Hearts, and an inward Sense of the Majesty of God, and of his Mercies towards us, when we come to join in them, which is our Part and Duty to do ; who can say that God's Praises thus celebrated, are not according to his Commands, and acceptable to him ? I think it sufficiently plain, that they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, which ought to be our Rule for this, and all other parts of God's Worship.

I think no more necessary therefore on this Head, but with all earnestness to beseech you who are of our

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our Communion, to consider how Great and Important a part these Praises are of the Worship of God, and to apply our selves with all Diligence and holy Zeal to the Performance of it; for we never come nearer the Employment of the Blessed, than when our Hearts and Mouths are filled with the Praises of our God.

S E C T. III.

The Dissenters Manner of Praising God in Publick.

AND now as to you my Friends and Brethren, who Dissent from this Worship of ours; give me leave with all calmness, to examine how you perform this great Work of praising God; and I desire you to compare your own Practice in your publick Assemblies, with what you find in your Bibles concerning this Duty.

I. Your *Directory* determines it to be the Duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of Psalms together in the Congregation; and that in singing Psalms, the Voice is to be tuneable and gravely ordered; and lastly, that it is convenient that the Minister, or some other fit Person appointed by him and the other ruling Officers, do read the Psalm, Line by Line, before the singing thereof; and your common Practice is to sing two or three Verses of a Psalm in Metre, the Minister or Clerk, first reading each Line, and the People singing it after.

II. Before I proceed to make any Observations on these Rules and Practice; to prevent Mistakes, I desire you to observe,

1. That I do not condemn the singing of Psalms in Metre, as unlawful.

2. That I take it for granted, That the Apostles and Primitive Christians did praise God in Prose; and that Metre and Rhime are, for ought appears, purely of Humane Invention.

3. We must consider that if we take the *Psalms* (as *We* use them) in Prose, there is not a more exalted piece of Poetry in the World, nor any Thing better fitted to raise in serious and well-disposed People, the most devout Affections. Whereas, if we take them as they are commonly used in Rhime, the Force, the Vigour, the Loftiness which are so Extraordinary in the Prose Translation, are almost entirely lost in the Verse; and though several have attempted to Translate them into English Verse, yet I cannot find that any one has done Justice to the Majesty of the Expressions, and hardly to the Sence of them.

III. Having premised these Things, I entreat you to consider impartially with me, how far this your Practice agrees with the Scripture Rule.

1st. Then, the Scriptures command us to praise God in *Psalms*; and undoubtedly the first Christians used whole *Psalms* at a time. Sometimes they joined together in singing them, as our Saviour and his Disciples did, *Matth. xxvi. 30.* Sometimes one only sung, and the rest attended for their Edification, as appears from *1 Cor. xiv. 26.* But the aforesaid Method of singing the Metre *Psalms* takes up so much time, that it is impossible to praise God in whole *Psalms* after that manner. But if we use the *Psalms* in Prose, according to the Order of our Church, the Experience of good Men doth testifie, that we may easily pass through them in a Month, with Seriousness and Attention, whether we sing or read them. And to well-disposed Minds no part of God's Service is more agreeable or edifying: Whereas some Years would not serve to that Purpose, if we should use the new-invented way of singing a few Verses. And I question whether all of them were ever yet sung through in one Meeting-place, perhaps not in all the Meetings of the Kingdom; and yet it must be confessed that every one of them

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was left to the Church by the Holy Ghost for that use ; and is profitable when thus used, for Doctrine, Reproof, Correction, Instruction and Comfort. Which plainly proves, that the singing the *Psalms* in Metre, is not the Scripture Way of using them.

2. Let me mind you, that in the time of the late Usurpation, Dr. Manton, a Man of considerable Reputation among the *Dissenters*, observes in his Comment on the Epistle of St. James, Chap. v. ver. 13. That several scrupled singing *Psalms* at all ; others objected against singing them in Verse ; this he calleth a *vain Cavil*, yet proposeth, *if the scruple continueth, that such may sing the reading Psalms, as hath been used in Cathedrals*, and vouches St. Austin and Athanasius for it : Which is a plain Confession from this considerable Person, that this Way of Singing is less liable to Exception, than yours.

3. I know it is alledged, that we ought to have the *Psalms* in Verse, for Singing, as well as we ought to have them in Prose for Reading. But I have shewed already, that Christ and his Disciples sung their Hymns in Prose ; and I desire you to consider whether it be necessary to vary from these Precedents. We have a Command to Translate them (which supposes into Prose, because the Original is so) but none to turn them into Metre, which necessarily requires Paraphrasing, changing the Order of the Sentences, sometimes adding and leaving out Words ; and on that account seems to give Humane Wit too great a Liberty of treating the Word of God as Men please : At least, we must acknowledge that the *Psalms* so ordered, partake of Humane Frailty, and are hardly equal to the best meer Humane Composures. When therefore we use such *Psalms*, we ought to use them as Humane Composures only, and not as God's Word : And thus they are used by our People in our Assemblies, not as

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any main substantial Part of the Worship of God, but rather as a voluntary Entertainment of Devotion, and a Refreshment to the People between the parts of the Service; much less are they allowed by us to jumble out the *Psalms* and *Hymns* appointed by God.

4. As to the Manner of Singing the *Psalms* in Metre, at present in Use, both with you and us in some Places, that is, the Minister or Clerk's reading a Line, and the People singing it after, is a great Interruption to the Musick, and to the Understanding of the *Psalms*, by breaking the Sense of it, and in that Respect very inconvenient, and is likewise a late Invention of our own, never used by any Foreign Church, either Popish or Reformed, for ought I can find, to this Day; and has been taken up to supply the Negligence and Laziness of People, who will not now, as formerly, be at pains to get *Psalms* by heart, or so much as procure Books. or learn to read them.

5. Notwithstanding your *Directory* requires the Voice, in singing *Psalms*, to be tuneably and gravely order'd; yet you have not only refused the Use of Instruments, (which are a natural Means to help the Voice, and make it Tuneable, and are used by most of the Reformed Churches in *Europe*) but have also determined it to be Unlawful.

I would entreat you to consider, that though perhaps it may not be so proper to press the Use of Instruments in the Service of God, in these Parts, where so many for want of being used to them, have entertained Prejudices against them, and some are incapable of being affected by them; yet the making them Unlawful, is against Nature and Scripture, and is on that account a dangerous Superstition, and Encroachment on Christian Liberty.

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6. The same Superstition and Encroachment it is, not only to forbear to praise *God* in singing or saying *Psalms* and *Hymns* by way of *Responses* or *Answering*, (of which I have given such Noble Precedents out of Scripture) but even to determine it to be unlawful.

Lastly, I would entreat you to consider, That forasmuch as appears, you have altogether laid aside the *Psalms* in *Prose*, and the other Scripture *Hymns*, that are of *God's immediate Appointment*, and for the Use of which we have the Example of our *Saviour* and his *Saints*, insomuch that they are no where used by you in the Praises of *God*; but in their stead you have substituted, as is before observed, a few Verses of a Psalm of *Humane Composure*, without Scripture Example or Precedent, and sing them in a Way that has nothing of ancient Practice, much less Scripture for it, but is purely and immediately an *Invention of Men*.

IV. The Case then between our Church and you, in this Point, I think impartially stands thus: Our Church praises *God* every Day with five or six *Psalms*, besides other *Hymns*, of *His Own Appointment*, and in *His Own Words* and *Method*, and yet is deserted and condemned by you in this very Point, as *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; whereas you, who only praise Him in a Piece of a Psalm of a few Verses, and in a *Method of your own finding out*, persuade your selves that you keep the Ordinances of *God* pure and unmixed from *Humane Invention*.

This is a Thing seriously to be consider'd by you; for as it is easie to think what all unprejudiced Men will judge of it now, so we may conclude what *God* will judge of it at the last Day. If you in earnest lay these Things to Heart, and reflect on them, I persuade my self that they will at least prevail with you to be modest in your Censures of us your Brethren;

thren; and prevent your Judging, much less Condemning us, or our Manner of Praising God, as Unacceptable to Him.

C H A P. II. Of PRAYER.

S E C T. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning it.

I. **L**ET us now proceed to the *Second Main Part of the Worship of God*, in the publick Meetings of Christians, which, I observed, was *Prayer, or Supplication.*

And if we consider what Rules, Directions and Examples the Scriptures afford us, for the Performance of this Duty, we shall find,

That they direct us to offer up our Prayers in a Set and Prepared Form of Words. That we may more clearly judge of this Matter, it will be fit to consider the several Parts of *Prayer* distinctly by themselves; such as *Confession, Supplication, Intercession, &c.*

1. *Confession* of our own Unworthiness, and of God's Mercy, to aggravate it, is commonly looked on as the first part of *Prayer*, and proper to introduce our *Supplications.* Now, in searching the Scriptures, we shall find express Command to use a Set Form of Words in both these sorts of *Confessions.* So *Deut. xxvi. 3. Thou shalt go unto the Priest that shall be in those Days, and say unto him, I profess this Day unto the Lord thy God, that I am come unto the Country which the Lord sware unto our fore-fathers to give us.* And then the Offerer was to make his *Confession, ver. 5. And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my Father, &c.* Here we have

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have a *Form of Confession* of the Person's *Unworthiness*, and of God's *Goodness* and *Mercy*, together with a *Profession* of *Obedience*, and *Dependence* on Him, prescribed by God Himself in Set and Prepared Words.

The same appears from *Solomon's* prescribing a *Form of Confession* for the Penitent *Israelites*, 1 *King*. viii. 47. Which Words we find accordingly applied in *Psal.* cvi. 6. and made part of a larger *Form of Confession*, to be used in their Captivity, (as *Solomon* designed them;) which appears from the 47th Verse of the same *Psalms*, (taken from the *Form* prescribed by *David*, 1 *Chron.* xvi. 35.) And *Daniel*, in his *Form of Confession* in Captivity, *chap.* ix. 5. uses the same *Form of Words*. From whence it appears, that they were not left arbitrarily to Choice or Discretion, though other Words might be joined with them, when there was Occasion to enlarge or vary the *Form*.

Many of the *Psalms* are *Forms of Confession*, and were used and daily repeated by the *Jewish Church*, *Psal.* li. was the *Form of Confession* *David* prepar'd and us'd for his Murther and Adultery: And he not only used it himself, but directed it to the Master of his Choire, to be used in the publick Service, as appears from the Title of it. *Psal.* lxxviii. is a general *Confession* for the whole People, setting forth at large the Mercies of God to them, and their Ingratitude, Disobedience, and Rebellion; and this not as a Pattern, but as a Set and Prepar'd *Form*, to be used in their publick Service. All which shew us, that Addresses to God in such *Forms*, are of Divine Institution; and are a Warrant to us, that He approves that our *Confession* should be made to Him in that Manner.

2. The Second Part of Prayer, is *Supplication* for good Things: And in this Case we have likewise the Commandment of God for a *Form of Words*, *Deut.* xxvi.

xxvi. 13, 15. *Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, Look down from thy holy Habitation, from Heaven, and bless thy People Israel, and the Land which thou hast given us, as thou swearest unto our Fathers, &c.* So *Hof. xii. 2. Take with you Words, and turn to the Lord your God, and say unto him, Take away all Iniquity, &c.* *Moses* in the Wilderness used a Set Form of Words to this purpose, and recommended it to be used by the Church of God for ever; as it is manifest from *Psal. xc.* which has this Title, *A Prayer of Moses, the Man of God.* When such a Person, by the Inspiration of the *Holy Ghost*, used, and left to be used by us in our *Supplications*, such a Set and Prepared Form of Words, we ought not to doubt but that Manner of Address is acceptable to God.

3. The Third Part of Prayer, is *Intercession* in the behalf of others. Now, Blessing is an eminent sort of Intercession, and for the Use of a Set Form of Words in this, we have likewise the Command of God, *Numb. vi. 23. On this wise ye shall bless the Children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, &c.* Here we have not only a Blessing, but an earnest *Intercession* with God for his People, and the *Form* and *Words* prescribed by Himself, which were not to be used by mean ignorant People, (who are only now supposed, by some, to need the help of *Forms*,) but by *Aaron*, and his *Sons* the Chief Priests. From which we may be assured, That God approves that Manner of Address in our *Blessings* and *Intercessions* for one another, not only from mean People, but from the greatest.

4. The Fourth Part of Prayer consisteth in *Petitions* for averting Evil, commonly call'd *Deprecation*. And for this purpose, we have several Forms prescribed by God, *Joel i. 14. Gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land, into the House of the Lord your God, and say unto the Lord, Alas for the Day; the Day of the Lord is at Hand, &c.* We have God's Com-

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mandment for another Form, *Joel ii. 17. Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord weep between the Porch and the Altar, and let them say, Spare thy People, O Lord, and give not thine Heritage to reproach, &c.* From whence it clearly follows, that God approves the Use of a Form in this part of Prayers, tho' commonly the most earnest and importunate, and such as seems least to admit of being bounded by a Form; so that we have the Approbation and Commandment of God for the Use of a Set Form of Words, in all the Parts of Prayer.

II. And accordingly we find holy Men of God, tho' full of Wisdom and of his Spirit, using the same Set Form of Prayer always on the same Occasion. Thus the Scriptures inform us concerning *Moses, Numb. x. 35. When the Ark set forward, Moses said, Rise up Lord, and let thine Enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee, flee before thee: And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many Thousands of Israel.* From whence it appears, that God approves the Use of one Set, Constant Form of Words in our Prayers, as long as the Occasion of repeating them is the same: For, I presume, none will suspect it was for want of Words, or of the Spirit of Prayer, that *Moses* confined himself to this Form.

I shall add further, That the whole Book of *Psalms*, is a Collection of Prayers of all sorts; and there are few of them but what are most Excellent Forms of Prayer, expressed in such pathetick, significant, and moving Words, that we have great Reason to thank God for furnishing us with them, and which we can never hope to equal by any of our own Invention, such are *Psalms* iv, v, vi, vii, ix, x, xii, &c. On this account they were used by the *Jews*, as the constant Service and Liturgy perform'd in their Temple, as we may gather from what I formerly quoted, *2 Chron. xxix. 30.*

III. But

III. But perhaps some may think these Commands and Examples of Set *Forms* of Prayer not to be a sufficient Warrant to Christians; because they are taken out of the Old Testament, before the Spirit was poured out in so plentiful a Measure as under the Gospel, I shall therefore proceed to examine the Commands and Examples of the *New Testament*. And here,

1. I think it is certain, that our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* prayed by a *Form*; for they joined in the Worship of the Temple and Synagogues, which consisted in *Psalms*, as I have already shewn, and in some certain *Forms* of *Prayers* added to them, and constantly used in their daily Service, as we learn from those that give an Account of the *Jewish* Worship at that * Time. Now our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* being frequently present at their Service, both in the Temple and Synagogues, 'tis manifest they approved the Manner of Addressing themselves to God in a Set *Form* of *Words*.

* Much to this Purpose might be urged out of the Rabbins; but the Author thinks it fit to confine himself to Scripture.

2. But our *Saviour* has put this Matter out of all dispute with impartial Men, by prescribing a *Form* to his Disciples, when they desired him to teach them to pray, as *John* taught his Disciples. For we find his Way of Teaching them, was not by directing them to wait for the Impulses of the Spirit, and immediate *Inspiration* from God, of what they were to offer up to him: We do not find him saying, *When ye Pray; speak what shall then come into your Minds, or what shall be given you in that Hour*, without taking thought about what they should say; as he did in another Case, that is, when they should be brought before *Governors* and *Kings* for his sake *Matth. x. 19*: But in Addressing themselves to God, he prescribed them a *Form* of *Words*, and commanded them to use it, *Luke xi. 2*. And he said unto them, *When ye pray, say,*
Our

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Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c. Here is an express Command of Christ to his Disciples, to use these *Words* when they Pray, *Our Father, &c.* A Command for the Use of a *Form*, so plain, that it is impossible to express it in clearer Terms.

'Tis not to be doubted but Religious Persons among the *Jews* offer'd up constantly Prayers to God. We see it in *David*, *Psal.* lv. 17. and in *Daniel*, chap. vi. 10. And no doubt the Disciples of our Saviour were not wanting in this Duty, nor in Skill to perform it; since we find that other devout Persons of their Time had their Hours of Prayer, as we see in *Act.* iii. 1. Therefore, what they desired of our Saviour was not to teach them absolutely, or in general, to Pray; but to teach them to Pray, as *John* also taught his Disciples; that is, to give them a *Form* of Prayer proper to his Institution, as they saw the Disciples of *Moses* and *John* had proper to theirs. Upon which our Saviour gave them the *Lord's Prayer*, as a Summary of the main Points of his Doctrine, and as a constant Badge of their being his Disciples. As if he should have said, *Whenever you offer up to God your usual Prayers, which Religious Custom has taught you, as Jews and Disciples of Moses, or of John, whether in Secret or Publick; add this always to your other Prayers, for a continual Remembrance to you, of those Duties, Privileges, and Qualifications which belong to you, as My Disciples; and as a Means of obtaining Grace from your Heavenly Father, to enable you to persevere in them.* The *Lord's Prayer* is therefore a Badge of our Profession, imposed by Christ himself, and to be used by us, as we would be accounted his Disciples.

Neither will saying the Substance of it in other Words of our own Invention, answer the Intent of this Command: Since,

1. We

1. We are sure the Substance of the Prayer is put by Christ in the most apposite and comprehensive *Words* that are possible; and therefore wholly to lay them aside for others, is plainly to decline the Choice of Words that Christ has made for us, and substitute less apposite of our own, to express those Petitions in.

2. The more particularly any thing is Commanded in the Worship of God, we ought to be the more careful to observe it; and may be the more confident, that God is pleased with our Performance of it. Since therefore we are particularly Commanded, when we Pray, to say, *Our Father*, &c. whatever other Prayers we offer to God, this ought not to be omitted.

3. In general, we are Commanded to offer up our Desires to God; and in particular to offer this Prayer. These Commands agree very well together, and therefore the one ought not to jumble out the other. To lay aside the Prayer particularly Commanded by Christ, for others of our own composing, in pursuance of the general Command, is too apparently to prefer our own *Invention* to God's *Command*.

4. When we take the Liberty to Word our own Prayers, we may forget some Things; we may mix our own Frailties and Weaknesses in our Petitions; and this too often appears both in the Matter and Word-ing of them. The way therefore to supply these Defects, and to obtain Pardon for our Infirmities, is, to use our Lord's perfect Prayer, not only as a *Pattern* for Prayer, (*as some will have it*,) but likewise as a *Form* necessary to be used, to correct what may be amiss or defective in our own Prayers.

5. They who lay aside the Words of the *Lord's Prayers*, are in danger to lay aside some of the Substance of it also; particularly the Substance of that Petition, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us*: For many who lay aside the

Lord's

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Lord's Prayer, do neither in Terms nor Substance offer this Petition to God ; nay, are so far from making this the *Condition* of their Pardon, as Christ has taught us, that they publicly dispute against the *Form*, for this very Reason : Though Christ, who foresaw the *Objection* which our *Corruptions* would be apt to make, has answered it, and bound it upon us indispensably as our *Duty*, to ask Forgiveness on these and no other Terms, *Mat. vi. 15.* And indeed, if such a Sentence had been prescrib'd by our *Lord*, to be only repeated by Christians once, or oftener, every Day, it would have seem'd but what was necessary to mind them of that peculiar and indispensable *Duty* of their *Profession*. We see the Wisdom of the Ancients thought fit to reduce their *Doctrine* or *Instructions* into *Proverbs*, or *short Sentences*, to be got by Heart, and kept continually in Memory, as of great Influence for guiding Men's Lives and Actions ; and such Sentences must be of much greater Influence, when repeated in the Presence of God, as these in our *Lord's Prayer* are required to be.

Lastly, This Prayer being given us as a Badge of our *Profession*, a Summary of our *Duty* as *Christians*, and a *Form of sound Words* ; it is no more lawful to alter it, than to lay it aside ; and it would be the same Presumption and Hazard to substitute other Words instead of Christ's, in this *Prayer* which we are oblig'd always to use when we pray, as to change the Words of our *Creed* ; or as it would be in a *Battle* to change the *Word* given by a General, or any part of it, and to retain only the Signification of it. From all which, 'tis manifest, that God has required *Forms of Prayer* to be used by us, both in the Old and New Testament.

As to the Difference we find in the *Lord's Prayer*, as delivered by St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*, 'tis to be observed, that our *Saviour* spake in the *Syriack* or vulgar *Hebrew*, and the Evangelists writ their *Gospels*

in *Greek*: Now in the *Syriack*, one and the same Word expresses both those different Words which the *Evangelists* use in the same *Petition*, as *Debts* and *Trespases*, &c. So that it is no *real*, but a *seeming* Difference between them; all the different Words being the same in the *Original Language* in which our *Saviour* spake.

IV. As we have the *Command* of *God*, and the *Example* of his *Saints*, for offering up our *Prayers* to Him, in a *Set* and *Prepared Form of Words*; so we have the like *Example* for *joining Voices*, upon *Occasion*, in offering these *Words*. Generally it is sufficient that the *People* join in their *Hearts* with the *Words* of *Publick Prayers*; yet the *Scriptures* warrant also, on *some Occasions*, their *joining their Voices*.

1. Thus we find the *People of Israel* addressing themselves to *God*, *Judg. xxi. 2.* *And the People came to the House of God, and abode there till Even, before God; and lift up their Voices and wept sore, and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel? &c.*

2. In *Hymns* and *Psalms* (which are also *Prayers* in great part, as I noted before) the *People* are generally allowed by all (as being fully warranted by *Scripture*) to join their *Voices*. So *Moses* and the *Children of Israel* sung unto the *Lord*, *Exod. xv. 1.*

3. In the *New Testament* we have an eminent *Example* of this *Practice*, *Act. iv. 24.* where the *Apostles* and their *Disciples* lift up their *Voice* to *God* with one accord, and said, *Lord, thou art God, &c.* If this *Prayer* was immediately inspired, as it seems it was; then the whole *Assembly* was inspired together, not only to think the same *Thing*, but likewise to utter the same *Words*; and the *Spirit of God* by it has attested the fitness and decency of a whole *Congregation's* pronouncing the same *Prayer* together. If it had not been convenient that this should be sometimes practised in our *Christian Assemblies*,

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Assemblies, God would not have given us this Example. If the People were always to join in their Hearts only with our publick Prayers, it would have been so here; for the Spirit of God would not have led them to do an indecent Thing, or a Thing unfit for God's Worship.

4. St. Paul and Silas joined also their Voices in their Prayers, as we may see from *Acts* xvi. 25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sung Praises unto God, and the Prisoners heard them. I know it may be alledged, That they sung their Prayers which they offered up to God on this Occasion, and on that account joined their Voices. I confess the Original favours this Inference; but if it be allowed that the Apostles sung their Prayers together, it must be allowed that they might likewise say them together: For we find the Blessed in Heaven offering not only their Praises together, but their Prayers also; so *Rev.* vi. 10. They cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood, &c. From all which, it is manifest, that we are warranted by the Examples of God's People, both in the Old and New Testament, to join our Voices, as well as our Hearts, in some of our publick Supplications to God; and that this Practice is no new Invention of Men.

V. If we consult the Scripture, we shall find that it is the Priest's part to make publick Intercession for the People, but yet so, that the People ought to bear a part by themselves, and answer in the Service, which we commonly call *Responses*.

1. They are commanded to do it, *Psal.* cvi. 48. where, after the Prayers and Praises, of which the Psalm consists, are ended, it is added, *Let all the People say, Amen; Praise the Lord:* And accordingly we find, *1 Chron.* xvi. 36. that the People said, Amen, and praised the Lord. And this is more significantly observable in that solemn Service at the Dedication

dedication of *Solomon's Temple*, where we find, first, the Priests and Levites praising God, *2 Chron. v. 13.* and saying, *For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever*: The usual *Form of Praising*, so often repeated in the *Psalms*, particularly in the *cxxxvith* which was probably us'd at that time. Then *Solomon*, who built the Temple, performed another part of the Service, *Chap. vi. 3.* He blessed, first, the People; Secondly, he blessed and thanked God for his Mercy; and, lastly, offered that Divine Prayer of Dedication, which we find in that Chapter: Then follow the *Burnt-Offerings* and *Sacrifices*, which were peculiarly the Priest's share of the Service, *Chap. 7.* And God gives his Approbation of their Praises, Prayers, and Offerings, by sending down Fire from Heaven to consume their Sacrifices: And then, last of all, follows the People's part, which they perform, *Chap. vii. 2.* *They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped and praised the Lord, saying, He is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.* This Service was ordered by the Spirit of God, and plainly shews us, that He approved of the People's having a share or part peculiar to themselves in his Worship.

2. If it be said, that this was the Way of Worshipping God under the Law, which is now abolished, and unlawful, as well as the other Levitical Ceremonies: The *Apostles* have answer'd this, by continuing this Practice in the Christian Church, and by admitting the People to bear a part in the publick Service, and to answer to the Prayers, have assured us that this is no legal abolished Ceremony. This is manifest from *1 Cor. xiv. 16.* *Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks?* Which shews, that even the Unlearned had a part assigned them in the Christian Assemblies. It may be added to this, what I observed before

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before, (*Chap. 1. Sect. 1. N. 4.*) of the *Responses* in praising God, and of the Worship described in the *Revelations*, where the *Angels* and *Elders* representing the Clergy, and the *Multitude* representing the People, bear each of them their distinct Parts; in allusion to what was done in the Christian Assemblies. And this is a clear Proof, that the People bare a part, and answered to the Blessing and Prayers of him that officiated, ever since the Christian Worship was established.

S E C T. II.

The Rules and Practice of Our Church, concerning Prayer.

HAVING thus seen the Directions and Examples which the Scriptures afford us for the publick Performance of our Prayers to God; let us now consider the Worship of Our Church, and compare it with them, both as to the Words and Matter of our Prayers: And, to the Comfort of us who are of this Communion, it will clearly appear;

1. That there is not one Thing we ask of God in them, which He has not particularly directed us to ask; or any Thing for which we ought to pray, that it is omitted. The Advantage we have towards the proof of this Point, that our Prayers are fixed and stated, and may be examin'd by all that have a mind to be satisfy'd in them. An Advantage we gain by putting them into a Set and Prepared *Form of Words*, according to the Commands of God, and the Examples of Holy Men; whereas 'tis impossible for such as use only *ex tempore* Prayer, thus to justify their Service, because their Prayers are altogether uncertain, and depend on the present thoughts of the Speaker.

2. Our Church requires the People to join their Voices with the Minister in some of the Prayers, in which they are more particularly concerned, and which seem of the most general and greatest Moment : Such are the general Confessions of Sin, and the *Lord's Prayer*.

3. Our Church has assign'd for the People some short Answers or Responses to our Prayers, whereby they may be stirred up to Attention, and signify their Concurrence with the Minister. Thus, to every Prayer and Blessing, they are obliged to answer, *Amen*, as we find the People did in the Church of *Corinth*; and to join unanimously in some other short Ejaculations, to implore God's Mercy, or beseech Him to hear us. In all which, I have already shewed we have the Warrant of Scripture; and it is plain to any one that will be at the pains to consider our Service, that we have taken the Rules thereof from Scripture, and have not invented a Service out of our own Heads; and then (as is too often the Custom of *Innovators*) endeavoured to make the Scripture comply with it. The first *Reformers* of our Church would never have retain'd and prepar'd *Forms* of Prayers, had they not found such in Scripture : They would never have required the People to join their Voices in some Prayers, and Answer to others, if the Examples of Scripture had not led them to it. They professed, and their Design was to make the Word of *God* their Rule; and we see how exactly they conformed to it in these Particulars. I wish I could say as much for all other Ways of Worship among Protestants.

S E C T. III.

The Practice of those who differ from Us.

I. **A**ND here I must entreat you of my Diocese, who dissent from our Worship, seriously to consider with me, what it is which you have substituted in the place of those things which you have entirely laid aside, tho' so expressly directed and warranted by Scripture; and examine whether your Way have a solid Foundation in *God's Word*. I shall endeavour to represent it with all fairness and impartiality, and leave you to judge as God shall direct you, and as you will answer it at the last Day.

And here I find that some of your *Writers* are of Opinion, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God in some Measure, for enabling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues to express convenient Desires to God*; and that therefore *Forms of Prayer* are of no necessary Use, either in *Publick* or *Private*; on the contrary, that they stint the Spirit, and hinder Men from stirring up or using the Gift that God has given them.

2. Others of you go further, and affirm, that all *Forms of Prayer* are unlawful to Christians, and that therefore it is a Sin to join in a Worship where they are used, or to be present at it.

3. That the Minister is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that he only is to speak publickly to God in the behalf of the People, and that they are not to join their Voices, but their Hearts only with him.

Upon these Principles you forsake our Worship, and many of you think it is a Sin to be so much as present at our Religious Assemblies. It is of great Importance therefore, that you should understand

what the Scriptures determine in this Matter; for if our Worship (which you thus forsake) be *plainly* enjoined by Scripture, (as I think I have made it sufficiently appear) and these Principles of *Your Worship*, and *Your Practice* pursuant to them, have no *Foundation* in Scripture; I cannot see how you can answer your forsaking our Assemblies, to God and your own Consciences. Let us then consider each of these Principles apart.

II. And first, for that Position of your *Directory*, *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God in some measure, for enabling their Hearts to conceive, and their Tongues to express convenient Desires to God*; I entreat you to consider what *Promise* or *Foundation* it has in Scripture. I profess to you seriously, That upon the strictest *Enquiry* I could make, I never could find any such *Promise* made to *all the Children of God*, in the Old or New Testaments; neither did I ever meet any *Dissenter* that was able to shew any such *Promise*, to furnish us with Words in Prayer, without the Use of Set and Premeditated Forms. If then there be *none* such, as we may be well assured there is not; Was it not too much Presumption in the Compilers of your *Directory*, to obtrude this Doctrine on the World, or persuade People to depend on it, and neglect the help of *Forms*, which the Scripture prescribes, and recommends to us? Nay, as there is no *Promise* for such extraordinary Assistance to *all the Children of God* to conceive Prayer; so neither is there any *Command* in Scripture, requiring us to *Worship* or *Pray* to God in a conceiv'd, extemporary, or unpremeditated Prayer, or so much as an Example in a settled ordinary Congregation where it was practised. If then you can shew none of these in the *holy Scriptures*, neither *Promise* nor *Command*, 'tis a plain Case, that this *Doctrine* is a meer *Invention* of Men, and the *Worship* built on it a *Vanity*, in the Sense of
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our Saviour, *Mark vii. 7.* If my Design were only to confute an *Adversary*, what I have already said were sufficient: But this *Spirit of Prayer* is a Point of such Consequence, that I hope it will be both grateful and instructive to the Readers of all Sorts, to explain it to them, and set it in as clear a Light as I can; which I shall do under the following Heads.

III. 1. First therefore, I doubt not but it will be granted, That whoever *prayeth* to God with *Faith, Sincerity, Fervency, Love, Humility, Conformity to God's Will, Understanding, and Decency of Expression*, prays *Acceptably* to Him, and is endowed with the *Spirit of Prayer*; and whoever prays without these, does want it.

2. I suppose no Man of himself can attain these Graces, that are requisite to make our Prayers acceptable, and that therefore we must have the Assistance of God's Spirit to beget them in us.

3. I suppose that it is possible for a Man to acquire, by natural Means and Ability, to express himself decently in Prayer; though he cannot so acquire Faith, or any other inward Grace; so that *Decency of Expression* is the lowest part of the Gift of Prayer, and not always a part of it.

4. I say, that one Praying by a *Form*, may have all these Qualifications, and therefore his Prayer may be acceptable to God, and proceed from his Spirit.

This may be proved to the *Dissenters*, 1. From the *Assemblies Larger Catechism*, which acknowledges it: For when the Question is put, *How is the Lord's Prayer to be used?* The Answer is, *The Lord's Prayer is not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make our Prayers, but may be also used as a Prayer, so that it be done with Understanding, Faith, Reverence, and other Graces necessary to the right Performance of the Duty of Prayer.* 2. Many of the *Psalms* are

are (as I observed before) *Forms of Prayer*, and the *Dissenters* make no Scruple to turn these *Forms of Prayer* into Metre, and then sing them Line by Line after the Minister. As for Example: The first Verse of the vth *Psalms* runs thus, in the Translation they use,

Give ear unto my words, O Lord,
my meditations weigh:
Hear my loud cry, my King, my God;
for I to thee will pray.

This is as much a *Form of Prayer*, as any in the *Litany*; and by their using it as they do, they plainly practise *Praying by a Form*: And do further also allow, That *Prayers*, as well as *Praises*, may be offer'd to God with *singing*, and that they may repeat their *Forms of Prayer* after the Minister. With what Reason then can it be said against us, That a *Form of Prayer* sung in Verse, and after the Minister's Reading it, is commendable; but the same said or sung in Prose, is Unlawful?

5. Extemporary conceived *Prayers* may want these spiritual Qualifications of *Prayer*, as, I believe, will not be denied by those that contend most for them, and they often are manifestly Deficient; being sometimes performed without Reverence or Decency of Expression, and by some even without Understanding; and where these Qualifications are found, others may be wanting. The Scriptures observe, *That a Man may make long Prayers*, and yet have a Mind dispos'd to devour *Widows Houses*. He may want *Faith*, *Humility*, *Fervency*, and *Affiance* in God, and yet be able to *Pray without a Form*: And therefore such *Prayers* are not always acceptable to God.

6. Therefore when God promises the *Spirit of Grace* and of *Supplications* to his People, *Zach. xii. 10.*
this

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this Promise doth not extend to enable all Men who are God's Children, to conceive with their Hearts, and expresse with their Mouths, convenient Desires without a *Form*: For, as I shewed before, every one to whom God gives a Heart and Disposition to Pray, has the *Spirit of Prayer*, and he who from this Principle offers up his Desires to God in a *Form*, prays acceptably; and he that offers them without that Principle, tho' he do it in unpremeditated and extemporary Words, is rejected, and therefore the Spirit of Prayer is the Grace, the Heart, the Disposition and Ability to Pray; and whether it be with or without a *Form*, such a Man's Prayers are acceptable to God; and it is greatly Superstitious to think or teach otherwise. If God give us a Heart to Pray, and by his Providence hath provided us a *Form* to expresse our Desires in, or enables us to make one, 'tis sufficient, and we ought to be thankful.

7. In Confirmation of this Account of the *Spirit of Prayer*, we may further observe,

1. That no *Worship* is acceptable to God, that is not offer'd to Him in *Spirit and Truth*, *John* iv. 24. and therefore the Scripture recommends to us *Prayers* in and by the Spirit; but that Praying with the Spirit, doth not signifie extemporary, unpremeditated Prayers, or exclude *Forms*, will appear from *1 Cor.* xiv. 15. *I will pray with the Spirit, I will pray with the Understanding; I will sing with the Spirit, I will sing with the Understanding also.* Here we find *Singing with the Spirit*, as well as *Praying with it*; and whoever sings otherwise, doth not worship God as he ought; but tho' we are obliged to sing with the Spirit, yet we must and ought to sing in the *Congregation* with a set *Form of Words*, and therefore, for the same Reason, tho' we *pray with the Spirit*, we may *pray by a Set and Prepared Form of Words*: The most *spiritual Songs*, consist of a Set
Form

Form of imposed Words, and so may the most *spiritual Prayers*. *Praying therefore with the Spirit*, in this Place, is so far from meaning, or being an Argument for the Use of extemporary, unpremeditated Prayers, that it is rather an Argument against them: For either we are obliged by it to sing to God in Extemporary Hymns, or we are not obliged to pray to Him in Extemporary Prayers; since it is unreasonable to interpret *Singing with the Spirit* in one Sense, and *Praying with the Spirit* in a contrary.

2. And to confirm this further, We find the most spiritual Persons addressing themselves to God in *Forms*; so did *Moses*, so did *David*, (as I observed before) and so did our *Saviour* himself on the Cross, when in his Agony he repeated the first Verse of *Psal. xxii.* in *Syriack*, and, as some believe, the *whole Psalm*; by which Act, he recommendeth to us *Forms of Prayer* in his dying Breath, as the most proper Means of expressing our Condition to God, and as most suitable to the Divine Majesty; and therefore *Praying — in the Spirit*, Eph. vi. 18. *Praying in the Holy Ghost*, Jude 20. and *with the Spirit*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. signifie *praying with Grace in our Hearts*, by the Assistance and Motion of the *Holy Spirit*. And a Man may as well pray with Grace in his Heart, when he *prays by a Form*, as sing with Grace in his Heart, when he *sings by a Form*.

3. We have a Promise that God's Spirit will assist us with this Grace in our Hearts, but we have no Promise that He will help us to Words without the use of *Forms*; as will appear from *Rom. viii. 26.* *The Spirit also helpeth our Infirmities*; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. Those inward Motions in the Heart, called here *Groanings*, are that Grace in the Heart with which we ought to pray, and to which the

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Spirit of *God* doth, and indeed only can help us; and to *pray with this Grace*, is to *pray in and with the Spirit*, whether we use Words or no; and if we do use them, whether we reduce them into a Form first, or pour them forth as they present themselves to our Minds; but we have no Promise that the *Holy Ghost* will always furnish us with fit Words on all Occasions, and therefore ought not to presume that He will.

4. 'Tis certain that He did furnish some with such Words; for we find both *Prayers* and *Hymns* dictated immediately by Him, of which we have Examples in the *Hymns* of the Blessed Virgin, and *Zacharias*, and in the Song or Prayer of *Simeon*, and in *Act. iv. 24.* But then it is manifest, that this was an extraordinary Gift of *God*, and a part of *Prophecy*, and we may not depend on the *Holy Ghost* for this Gift, more than for any other extraordinary Gift, till it be made appear that it was to continue always in the Church, and to be communicated to all the Children of *God.* *Praying*, and *Singing the Praises of God*, are Duties incumbent on all Christians; but we are no more obliged to pray *Extemporary Prayers*, from any Example of inspired Men in Scripture, than to sing *Extemporary Hymns*, from the like Examples; to which yet none, I think, pretend.

5. 'Tis very observable, that even those who composed their *Prayers* and *Hymns* by immediate Inspiration, did not generally offer them to *God* in the Congregation, till they had first reduced them into a Form. Thus *David* first penn'd his *Psalms*, and then deliver'd them to be sung, *1 Chron. xvi. 7.* and 'tis probable the *Prophets*, *1 Cor. xiv. 26.* did the same; for they are supposed, every one to have a *Psalms*, a *Doctrine*, a *Tongue*, a *Revelation*, &c. that is, to have them ready, and reduced into Form. for the Use of the Church, when they came together. That this

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is the meaning of *having a Psalm*, &c. in this Place, will appear very probable, not only from the Words which naturally imports this, and can hardly be otherwise interpreted, but likewise from the *Apostles* making a difference between what these *Prophets* had prepared, and what was revealed immediately at the time of their being together, *ver. 30. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.* Which shews that these *Psalms*, &c. were to give place to such as were immediately inspired: So far were these inspired Men from countenancing an Extemporary, Unpremeditated way of serving God, except where there was an immediate *Revelation* for it, and so utterly void of Scripture-Proof is this great Principle of the *Dissenters* Worship, that the Spirit of Prayer is given to every one of the Faithful, to enable them to conceive with the Heart and express with their Tongues their Necessities to God, without a Form.

8. It lies therefore, my Friends, on your Teachers who are of this Persuasion, to produce plain Scripture for your Principles, or else to confess that you have laid aside *Prayers by Forms* commanded by God, and practised by *Holy Men* in Scripture, to make room for this way of *Praying*, of Men's own Invention. But further, that place, *Eccles. v. 1, 2.* seems to me to afford a strong Argument against such Prayers, *When thou goest to the House of God,—Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth: Therefore let thy words be few.* It is hard to say what it is to be *rash with our Mouths*, or *hasty to utter any thing before God*, if it be not *rashness* to trust the expressing all our Desires, to such uncertain and unpremeditated Words as our invention suggests unto us, when we come before Him, which (as I have shewed) the Scriptures give us no promise of being supplied to us by the Spirit on ordinary

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dinary Occasions. I appeal to you, whether it would not be looked on as a rashness for an ordinary Person to speak to a Prince, or solemn Assembly, concerning a Matter of great Moment, in Words unpremeditated and unform'd, and we shall hardly find any so rash as to venture on it. King Solomon here seems to have recommended the same Modesty to Men in their Addresses to God.

But inasmuch as God has not expressly forbidden all *Extemporary Prayers*, I would not be understood by this to condemn all such, as Unlawful. There may be some Men (tho' not very many) able to express themselves significantly and decently, *ex tempore*; and there are some Occasions that require it even in Publick; and on these Occasions, when a Man has no time allowed him to reduce his Desires into *Form* before he offers them, he may depend on the Assistance of God's Spirit, as we may in all other Cases of Necessity, or at least hope for Pardon of course to our Infirmities: But to depend on that Spirit, and neglect the Means God has given us to provide our selves, looks so like tempting him, that we ought carefully to avoid it: And I find prudent modest Men are aware of this, and though they be very famous for Extemporary Prayers, yet they pray really as much by a *Form*, as if they had the *Common-Prayer* before them. The Secret is only this, they compose Forms of Prayer of several sorts, digest them well in their Minds, and commit them to Memory; so that they can, on occasion, transpose the Parts of them, change, add, or leave out, as they see Reason; and thus they are, in effect, provided with a *Form*, tho' the People cannot perceive it, and admire them for their readiness and fluency. It is easie for any Man of moderate Parts to manage the Matter thus; but the more ignorant and ordinary Preachers, that know not, or are not capable of the Method of it, fall
into

into very indecent and vain Repetitions, and are often at a loss, when they strive to practise this Way of Addressing to God.

Another Account may be given of these seeming Extemporary Prayers, not much different from the former, namely, That good Men who make a Conscience of secret Prayer to God, and have grown up in a constant Discharge of this *Duty*, do by degrees fall into a *Form* even with themselves; for how much soever their Prayers were *ex tempore* at first, yet having *continual Occasion* of praying to God for the same things, they find in time that there is but one best Way of expressing the same Thing; which necessarily leads to a *Form*. However, the various Ways they made use of before they settled on one, serve them as so many *Forms* when they come in Publick: And by changing of these, they seem to pray *ex tempore*.

10. Lastly, Let me observe, That the Use of *Extemporary conceived Prayers*, even in Cases of Necessity, is founded on a general Rule of Scripture only, which commands us to ask of God what we lack: Of which Rule our own Prudence makes the Application in such Extemporary Occasions. But when we set up this Humane Application of this general Rule, in opposition to that particular manner of asking, commanded by *God*, and practised by *Holy Men*, which is by Set and Premeditated *Forms* in the ordinary Worship of God, and turn God's Way out of his Worship to make room for one of our own: This is to displace a particular Command of God, on pretence of guiding our selves by a general one: In which we are not only more liable to Mistakes, but we fail of paying due Respect to God's Directions. For general Commands ought only to take place in such Cases where God has not laid down a particular Rule.

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And thus I have examined the First Principle of Dissenters; *That the Spirit of Prayer is given to all the Children of God, whereby they are enabled to Conceive with the Heart, and Express with the Mouth convenient Desires to God.*

IV. I come now to speak to the Second; *That all Forms of Prayer are unlawful to Christians; and that it is a Sin to join in a Worship where they are used, or so much as to be present at it.* If there be any of you for whom I intend these Papers, of this Opinion, as I fear some of you are, and all of you do in your Practice who comply with those that maintain it, and therefore cannot acquit your selves from countenancing it; I desire you to observe, That if there were no harm in the Opinion, or if it were a meer Speculation, we should not be much concern'd at their Mistake. But by what I have shew'd of the Scripture Authority of *Forms*, it is plain, That they who maintain this Principle, do not only teach for *Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; but, in effect, set themselves up above Christ, and countermand what he has required. They not only add to the Gospel a new Command, by teaching that to be Unlawful, which Christ has no where Condemned; but they teach that to be Unlawful, which He has positively Commanded. Whoever therefore do Teach *Forms of Prayer* to be Unlawful, or Countenance those that do Teach this Doctrine of Men, cannot acquit themselves from the Imputation of Resisting the *Holy Ghost*, by whose Inspiration the Word of God is penn'd.

I can foresee only one Thing that can be alledged in favour of those who maintain this Opinion: And 'tis, That to pray *with or without a Form* (excepting the *Lord's Prayer*) is in it self indifferent; and that therefore the asserting the Use of *Forms*, is not a Matter of such weight, as to justify our Contending with our Brethren about it; and that it seems

Uncharitable in us, to insist on a Thing which they are fully persuaded is Unlawful, and we our selves count indifferent.

1. But in Answer to this, it is to be observed, *First*, That an Opinion which necessarily divides him who believes it from the Communion of all the Established Churches in the World, cannot be of so little Moment as the Objections would make it. And such is this Opinion of the Unlawfulness of

*See Durel and
Knox's Book of
Disc.*

Forms of Prayer; since there neither is, nor has been any Established Church these 1500 Years, but has maintained their Lawfulness, and used them in the Service of God; and therefore whoever believes them to be Unlawful, in whatever Age he had lived, he must have separated from all the Established Churches of the World at that time: And surely an Opinion that necessarily produces such a Division, must be of mighty Consequence, whether true or false, and ought to be carefully examin'd; and if false, to be zealously opposed. But,

2. I suppose it will be granted, That eating Swine's Flesh, or Drinking Wine, are as indifferent as using a *Form of Prayer*, and of less Concern to the Souls of Men; and that therefore to Teach these to be Unlawful, would be as innocent a Mistake, as to Teach the Unlawfulness of *Forms*. For if we compare these two Doctrines together, and the Mischiefs that each of them have, or may hereafter produce; it is hardly conceiveable, that the forbidding the Use of some particular Meats, should have so many ill Effects, as the forbidding *Forms of Prayer* has had already. Yet it is observable how St. Paul judges of that Doctrine, 1 Tim. iv. 1. *In the latter times* (saith he) *some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils — Forbidding to marry, and to abstain from meats, which God*

hath

hath created to be received with thanksgiving. You see here *St. Paul* counts it a Departure from the Faith, and a Doctrine of Devils, to forbid, as Unlawful in it self, any sort of Meat which God has created for the Use of Man: And if it be so Criminal, to Teach any sort of Meat to be Unclean, when God has not forbidden it; then sure, to Teach a *Form of Prayer* to be Unlawful, when God has Commanded it, must be a very ill Doctrine. And this Consideration alone ought to make those who maintain it, or any such Doctrine whereby they are obliged to condemn their Brethren as practising Unlawful Things, to examine it carefully and impartially by the Word of God, lest they be imposed on by seducing Spirits.

The great Design of the Devil, is to bring us into an entire Subjection to his Will. But when he despairs of this, his next Attempt is, to share with God in our Obedience; and impose new Commands of his *Own* upon us, as if they were *God's*, and so to procure himself to be *obey'd*. This he doth most successfully, by giving them an Appearance of Religion, and of more than ordinary strictness. Thus in Saint *Paul's* time, under colour of *Mortification*, he forbade Meats and Marriage, as unlawful, which God had allowed; speaking Lyes in Hypocrisie, and under shew of Religion. And thus, 'tis to be feared, he has prevailed on some, under colour of greater Spirituality, to abstain from *Forms of Prayer*, as Unlawful, which God has enjoined.

And here it is very Remarkable, That where-ever the Devil gains this Point with Men, and brings them to believe a Thing to be forbidden by God, which He has not forbidden, he soon brings a super-added Command of his *Own*, in Competition with some of *God's*, and prevail with them to prefer his Commands to *God's*; and so plungeth them into direct Disobedience, which was his Design at first.

Thus when he had prevailed with Men to abstain from *Marriage*, they soon fell not only to *Commit Fornication*, but even, in some Cases, to *Allow* it, rather than *Marriage*, (as the *Papists* do.) And by persuading Men to abstain from *Forms of Prayer*, as Unlawful, he has deprived them, in many Places, of all Opportunity of *Publick Worship*; and made them chuse rather not to serve God at all in Publick, than with a *Form*; which is the Case of many Thousands now in this Kingdom, who worship God publickly no where. But,

3. This Doctrine, of the Unlawfulness of *Praying by Forms*; is no such indifferent Thing, that we may safely indulge Men in their own Sense about it; since it is very apt to puff them up, and make them take false Measures in judging of their own Condition, and of the Influence of *God's Spirit* upon them.

We know that all good Men have the Spirit of God, and are guided and influenced by it in the whole tenour of their Lives; we make no doubt but they are assisted by Him in their Prayers, but no less in forgiving an Injury, or resisting a Temptation; and his influence on a good Man's Mind, is rather greater and more sensible in these and other Acts of Religion, than in Prayer. Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, are the Fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. And it is principally by these we ought to conclude that we have that Spirit. But the Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms of Prayer*, on a Persuasion that the Spirit of God enables every Child of God to converse with the Heart, and express with the Mouth suitable Desires, entitles every one to God's Spirit in some Measure, that is able to express himself in apt and fluent Words, tho' without the other Graces of the Spirit; and exposes every one to Despair, that is not able to do this, as looking on himself to be destitute

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stitute of the Spirit, tho' otherwise Meek, Humble, and Charitable, and endowed with such Graces as are much more certain signs of His Presence. Nay, so far are many deluded by this Opinion, that they judge themselves or others Children of God, and in his Favour, according as they are more or less endowed with this Gift, without Respect to other Qualifications. And I dare appeal to *your selves*, whether some very *immoral Persons* guilty of *gross and scandalous Crimes*, have not been eminent for this *Gift of Prayer*? And whether such Persons are not apt to flatter themselves that they are the Children of God, and endowed with his Spirit, notwithstanding all their Wickedness? And it is impossible either to convince these Persons of their Mistake, or to Comfort *poor ignorant People*, deject only for want of this Gift, whilst they are possessed with this Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms*.

Which, in the 4th place, ought not to be countenanced or indulged as an indifferent Thing, because it has been a great hindrance to secret *Devotion*: Every Christian ought at least twice a Day to address himself to God in secret Prayer; but a great part of the *World* cannot do it without a *Form*; *Children* and *ignorant Persons* are at a *loss* for *Words*, and even *other People* are often not able to find them *readily*, especially when wearied, dull, or indisposed, as is sometimes the Condition of the best Christians; this makes secret Prayer, at least a *constant regular course of it*, uneasy to most that are absolutely against all Use of *Forms*, and it occasions too many to neglect it, which otherwise would not: And as for *Children* and *ignorant People* amongst those of this Persuasion, I am well assured many of them never bow their Knees in secret to God; and several of those that are grown up, are forced to speak aloud, or cannot pray at all; which is against the Nature of secret Prayer, and exposes not only the Persons that

use it to the censure of *Hypocrisie*, but the Duty to *Contempt*. 'Tis on this account that the pious Custom of Training up *young People* to a *constant course of Devotion*, in the Morning and Evening secret Prayers, is too universally laid aside among you, as I have found by Experience; and for the truth of the Observation, I dare appeal to all of the *Dissenters*. On the contrary, I am well assured that there cannot be a more effectual or easie Method to revive and continue this regular and constant Use of secret Prayers, than to oblige every one to some certain *Forms* every Morning and Evening, which they may not omit, whatever other Prayers they use: But this can never be done, whilst the Opinion of the Unlawfulness of *Forms* prevails; and therefore all good People are obliged to oppose it, as they would retrieve the constant Use of secret Prayers; which shews that this is no indifferent Matter, as the Objection would suggest, but of great Weight, and fit to be contended for.

I will not mention some *other Reasons* that are of great Moment, because they would but Exasperate, and tend to make the Duty of Prayer, when performed *ex tempore*, Ridiculous, which ill Men might extend (as it too often happens) to expose *Devotion* in general; such are the indecent Expressions which sometimes fall from Persons that Pray thus: I will only observe to you, That *Extemporary Prayers* of some Preachers have too often given occasion of Offence to serious Persons even among your selves. 'Tis certain, that to print some of them as they had been spoken, as those that we make use of are printed, would not be for the *Honour* of the *Holy Spirit*, to whom they are ascribed, nor much recommend them to serious Men. But I esteem it an ill Thing, for Men to Ridicule one another's *Devotion*, whatever it is.

V. There

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V. There remains yet the *Third Opinion* of *Dissenters*, which they advance against us in this Matter of *Prayer*, to be examin'd *That the Minister is the Mouth of the Congregation, and that the People have nothing to do but to join with him in their Hearts.* An *Opinion* far from any Authority of Scripture, which expressly requires us, *Rom. xv. 6. with one Mind, and one Mouth, to glorifie God.* We produce this, and many other Places and Examples in Scripture, for the Peoples joining their Voices, and bearing a part in their Praises and Prayers; and we are assured there is no Scripture forbids it; and therefore when you condemn it, or teach it to be Unlawful, we must charge it upon *You*, as an Instance of *Your Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* Which is all I think needful to be said to this Head, after what I have shewed before, in Defence of our contrary Practice, from Scripture; and I think, sufficient to induce you seriously to consider it.

And thus, I presume, I have faithfully examined the Rules and Examples the Scriptures afford us for the performance of that part of our publick Worship that consists in Prayers, and compared the Service of our Church, and the *Dissenters* way of Praying with them, and made it appear, that our Performance of this Duty, both as to the Matter and Manner, is agreeable to the Commandments of God, and to the Examples of Holy Men recorded in Scripture: And that the Service the *Dissenters* have substituted in the room thereof, has in many Particulars laid aside God's Commands, and deserted the Examples of Scripture, and is, in the main part thereof, an immediate *Invention of Men.*

And I entreat you who are of this Persuasion, and adhere to these Principles of Worship which I have now mention'd, and shewed to be disagreeable to Scripture, to consider seriously, whether you are not thereby literally guilty of that Sin with which

Our Saviour taxeth the Jews, *Mark vii. 7. of Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; And also of that Superstition condemned by St. Paul, *Col. ii. 21. which saith, Touch not, taste not, handle not,* (that is, which teaches to forbear those Things which God has made Lawful) *after the Doctrines and Commandments of Men*: And I beseech God to enlighten your Minds to make a true Judgment in it, that you may deliver your Souls.

C H A P. III.

O F H E A R I N G.

S E C T. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning it.

I. **O**NE great Design of our Christian Assemblies, is *Hearing*; and that which is to be Heard, is the *Word of God*. I shall proceed in examining this, in the same manner as I have done in the former Chapters; And consider, First, What Directions the Scriptures afford us for the publick performance of this Duty. Secondly, Shall compare our Own Practice with them: And, Thirdly, That of the *Dissenters*.

First then, God has positively Comanded us to read His *Word* in our publick Assemblies. So *Deut. xxxi. 10. In the Feast of Tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God, in the place where the Lord shall chuse: thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their Hearing. Gather the People together, Men, Women and Children, and thy Stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the Words of this Law.* And 'tis observed, *Jos. viii. 35.*
that

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that there was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the Congregation.

Neither was this confined to their Solemn Assemblies at *Jerusalem*: It was likewise a constant part of their *Sabbath Service* in their Synagogues; as we may learn from *Acts* xiii. 14. where it is observed, that *Paul and Barnabas went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and sat down; and after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the Rulers of the Synagogues sent unto them, &c.* and *St. Paul* takes notice, ver. 27. that the *Prophets were read every Sabbath-day*, meaning undoubtedly in their Assemblies. And *St. James*, (*Act.* xv. 21.) of *Moses* his being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-day.

II. This Reading the Law, was the great and most effectual Means God provided for preserving the knowledge of Himself amongst his People; and where it was omitted, the People immediately sunk into *Idolatry*; and the best Reformation began, and was carried on, by restoring this Ordinance. Thus 'tis observed, of *Josiah*, 2 *Chron.* xxxiv. 29. that he gathered together all the *Elders of Judah* and *Jerusalem*—*And all the Inhabitants of Jerusalem and the Priests and the Levites, and all the People great and small, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the Covenant that was found in the House of the Lord.* The like is observed of *Ezra*, *Nehem.* viii. 3. *And he read therein before the Street that was before the Water-gate, from Morning until Mid-day, before the Men and the Women, and all that could understand.* 'Tis remarkable, that after the Captivity, the *Jews* never fell into *Idolatry*; and the chief reason given by themselves, was, the strict Observation of this Ordinance of God, the Law being constantly read to them afterwards publickly in their Synagogues: So powerfully doth God bless his own Ordinances, to preserve those that use them from Error and Sin.

III. From the Practice of the Synagogue in Reading the *Law* and the *Prophets*, the like Order was brought into the Christian Church; and *Reading* was made a part of the Office of the *Christian Elders*, as it was before of the *Jewish*. And hence it is that *Timothy* is commanded by *St. Paul*, *1 Tim. iv. 13.* to give attendance to *Reading*, as well as to *Exhortation* and *Doctrine*. And the inspired Writings of the *Apostles* were read in the Christian Assemblies, as well as the *Law* and *Prophets* among the *Jews*; according to *St. Paul's* Command, *Col. ii. 16.* *When this Epistle is read amongst you, cause that it also be read in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.* And it was but Reason, since the Gospel contained the Christian Law, that it should be read in the Christian Assemblies, as well as the Law of *Moses* was in the Synagogues. And that it was so read in the first Christian Assemblies, I might shew by many Instances out of the Ancient Fathers, if there were occasion.

IV. This publick *Reading* the Law was of so great Reputation, that it is termed *Preaching* it; as we may see from *Acts xv. 21.* *For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day.* The word *Preaching* has a peculiar Sense in the *New Testament*, and signifies properly to Declare or Proclaim the Word of God, as a Herald or Cryer proclaims the Laws or Orders of a King. Hence only those that proclaim'd the Gospel to such as had not heard it before, or read the *Old Testament* to the People, are said to *Preach*. *Preaching* is distinguish'd from *Teaching* and *Exhortation*; and 'tis observable, that in the whole *New Testament*, tho' reading the Scripture is call'd *Preaching*, yet interpreting them, applying them, or exhorting the People from them in a Christian Auditory, is never called by that Name.

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If it be objected, That *St. Paul* is said to *preach* to the Disciples, *Acts* xx. 7. when he only in probability made a Sermon, or Exhortation to Believers, as is usual now; I Answer, That the Original of this Word (*διαλέγομαι*) is never translated *preach*; in any other place of the New Testament, and should not have been here, but *discours'd, disputed, speak, or reason'd*; so it is translated in *Acts* xvii. 2, 17, 18, 19. & xix. 8, 9. *Heb.* xii. 5, &c. for the Original words which properly signifie *preaching*, are *κηρύσσω* and *εὐαγγελίζω*. From all which, it is manifest, that there are only two Ways by which the Word of God is properly *preached*; the first is, when it is declared to those that never heard of it before; and the second is, when the very words of the Scripture are read publickly to the People, as a Cryer doth a *Proclamation*, which he doth not word himself, but reads it in the words in which it is delivered to him.

In short, The Scriptures are *Sermons* out of the Mouth of God, being dictated by his *Holy Spirit*; for the Reading of which to the People, for their *Conviction and Instruction*, there is a peculiar *Command of God*; and where this *Ordinance* is duly observed, then they are sure of the *Word of Life*; and 'tis impossible they should be ignorant of their Duty, for the Scriptures are sufficient to make them wise to *Salvation*; and the Hearing them with Humility and Attention, is a Means sufficient to beget *Faith* in the Hearts of those that Hear them; for they are profitable for *Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good Works*, as we see *1 Tim.* iii. 16, 17.

V. We find in *Holy Scripture*, that the publick Reading of the *Word of God* was with great Solemnity. 'Tis observed, *Nehem.* viii. 5. *When Ezra opened the Book, all the People stood up, and Ezra blessed the Lord,*
the

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the great God ; and all the People answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground : And I find it generally agreed, that both the Readers and Hearers stood up whilst the Law was read, though not when other Things were read or taught ; hence it is observed, Luke iv. 16. that Our Saviour stood up for to read ; and ver. 20. after closing the Book, that He sat down to teach : Hence, Rev. v. God is represented, in allusion to the High-Priest, with a Book in his Right Hand, containing the Revelations of his Will ; and the Lamb, as his Minister, takes it out of his Hand to declare the Contents of it ; and ver. 8. When he had taken the Book, the four Beasts and and four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb—And they sung a new song : The Angels join with them, ver. 11. and the whole Creation, ver. 13. From whence we see the Scriptures teach us to receive the Revelations of God's Will out of the Book of Life, with Adoration and Praises : And therefore we find, that at the reading the Law, Confessions and Praises of God were intermixed and succeeded one another, Nehem. ix. 3. And they stood up in their place, and read in the Book of the Lord their God, one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God.

VI. We find that the Word of God is to be read in such a Language as the People understand. After the Captivity, the People being Born and Educated in a strange Land, their Language was changed, and they did not understand, at least Universally, the pure Hebrew in which the Law was first written ; therefore when Ezra read in the Law, a certain number of the Priest and Levites interpreted the Words of the Law, as Ezra read them to the People : Nehem. viii. 8. And they caused the People to understand the Law, and the People stood in their place ;

so

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so they read in the Book, in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading: And this Custom continueth among the Jews to this Day; first the Hebrew Text is read, and then a Translation or Paraphrase in a Language understood by the Hearers. And indeed, there may be good Reasons for reading the Originals of publick Assemblies, such a Custom being an effectual means to preserve the Knowledge of them; but they cannot be useful to the People without a Translation. Therefore St. Paul doth not absolutely forbid speaking in unknown Tongues in the Church, but orders, 1 Cor. xiv. 27. *Let one Interpret, but if there be no Interpreter, let him keep silence in the Church.*

VII. We find that after reading the Word of God, there was sometimes an Enlargement or Comment on some part of it, and an Exhortation to the People: Thus when our Saviour had read a portion of Scripture, He applied it to the People in a Discourse to that Purpose. But it doth not appear that this was constantly done; on the contrary, it is rather probable that it was not. For had there been a constant Provision for such Enlargement and Exposition of the Law, and Exhortation from it, there had been no occasion for the Rulers of the Synagogue, Acts xiii. 15. to send to St. Paul and Barnabas, after the reading of the Law and Prophets, that Message we find there, *Ye Men and Brethren, if ye have any Word of Exhortation for the People, say on.* St. Paul supposes him who Teaches, and him whose Office it was to Exhort, distinct from him that Ruled, and him that Ministred, Rom. xii. And it doth not appear that every Church was furnished with all these Officers. The same St. Paul joined Exhortation and Doctrine with Reading, in his Charge to Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 13. which shews that they went together, but whether indispensably or no, doth not appear; tho' it is manifest, in the Practice of most Churches

Churches in the Ages after the Apostles, they were all generally exercis'd in the publick Worship.

VIII. Lastly, We find that they had a *Summary* of the principal Doctrines of the Gospel, which they delivered to the People, and by which they ordered their own Discourses, and judg'd of what was delivered by others. Thus St. Paul to Timothy, 2 Tim. i. 13. *Hold fast the Form of sound Words which thou hast heard of Me; and Chap. ii. ver. 2. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many Witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others:* Perhaps this may be that proportion of Faith according to which the Prophets are exhorted to prophesie, Rom. xii. 6. I think it is not doubted but this *Form of sound Words* contained the main Fundamentals of Christianity; and St. Paul tells us what those were, Heb. vi. 1, 2. *Therefore leaving the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards God, of the Doctrine of Baptisms, and of laying of Hands, and of the Resurrection of the Dead, and of the eternal Judgment.* In all probability therefore, the Form of sound Words delivered by St. Paul to Timothy, and by him to others, contained these six Heads of Principles of Christianity, which every Christian was obliged to hear and learn.

S E C T. II.

The Practice of Our Church, in Reading and Preaching the Word.

THESE are the Rules and Examples the Scriptures propose to us, for our feeding the People with the Word of Life, and their Hearing it in Publick. Let us, in the second Place, compare the *Practice of our Church* with them, and surely no Copy can come nearer the Original.

i. For,

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1. For, first, Our Ministers are expressly oblig'd, in their Ordination, diligently to read all the Canonical Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Testament* unto the People assembled in the Church where they shall be appointed to serve.

2. Our Church has disposed the Holy Scriptures in a certain Order, and has appointed four or more Chapters to be read every Day in the publick Congregations, by which means all the most edifying parts of the *Old Testament* are Order'd to be read once a Year, and the *New Testament* (except the *Revelations*) thrice in the same time; And some select Chapters of the *Revelations* are appointed on extraordinary Occasions. There are indeed some Chapters (about one tenth) of the *Old Testament* left out of this Order; but then it is to be observed, that those which are left out, are either Genealogies, Names of Persons and Places, Historical Repetitions, or some obscure and mystical Prophecies in *Ezekiel*, which are not so proper for an ordinary Assembly, (for which Reasons, some part of the *Revelations* is also left out) yet these are not excluded, tho' not particularly Commanded. The general Obligation on every Clergy-man, in his Ordination, to read *all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament*, still allows him to read these, and also obliges him to it when he shall perceive that it may be for the Edification of the People.

3. Besides this Order for the whole Scriptures, on every *Lord's-Day*, and other solemn Occasions, there are appointed certain select Portions out of the Epistles and Gospels to be read, which are adapted to the Occasion; and contain some great Mystery of our Faith, or other weighty Matter necessary to our Edification.

4. For the more Solemnity of these Readings; Our Church joins with each of them Praises, Thanksgivings, or Confessions, according to what we find practised in the *Holy Scriptures*.

5. That

5. That the People may benefit, and be edified by *hearing* the Word of God, a plain Authentick and most excellent Translation is provided by publick Authority, in which the Scriptures are read to the People. This was the first Care of our Church in the Reformation; and the generality of *Dissenters* are forced to be beholden to it for the Word of Life, and draw all the Knowledge that they have, from the Fountains which our Bishops opened for them, by Translating the Word of God, and putting it into a Language they understand.

6. 'Tis order'd in Our Church, that the Ministers shall explain some part of the *Holy Scriptures* every *Lord's-Day*, and exhort their Congregations in a Sermon.

7. To inculcate the great Mysteries of our Faith the better, Our Church has appointed certain Solemn Times, wherein once in the Year they are obliged to explain and inculcate every great Mystery of our Faith, and most material Passages of the Gospel: Such are the Conception, Birth, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Saviour.

Lastly, There is provided a *Form* of sound Words in a short and plain *Catechism*; in which are contained the first Principles of the Oracles of God; this is adapted, as it ought to be, to the Capacity of Children, and is indeed *sincere Milk*, without School Notions, or hard Words. And all the six Principles which the Apostle mentions, *Heb. vi. 1, 2.* are briefly explained in it, and yet largely enough to make those that attend to it, wise to Salvation. The Teaching and Explaining these Fundamentals, is a part of our publick Instruction, and enjoined as a constant Duty on Ministers and People in our solemn Worship. The Minister in each Parish being required diligently upon *Sundays* and *Holy Days*—openly in the Church to instruct and examine so many Children of his Parish sent unto him,

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him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism, and the People are obliged to come at the time appointed, and obediently to Hear.

And by our Twelfth Canon, for the better grounding of the People in the Principles of Christian Religion, 'tis ordained, That the Heads of the Catechism, being divided into so many Parts as there are *Sundays* in the Year, shall be explained to the People in every Parish-Church.

This is the Care our Church has taken to teach the People in their publick Assemblies; and the Method is so effectual, that 'tis scarce conceivable how any one, who duly conforms to these Orders, should be ignorant of any Thing that concerns his Soul.

And by the Blessing of God, the Effect is such, that we may affirm, without Vanity or Partiality, That our Clergy, and Laity, especially where we can prevail with them to conform to the Rules of our Church, are generally much more knowing, modest, governable, devout and charitable, than perhaps may be found in any other Church; of which our late Contest with the *Papists*, and Behaviour under their Government, and since the present Revolution, are evident Proofs.

S E C T. III.

The Practice of the Dissenters in Hearing and Reading the Word.

I Come now to consider, with you my Friends who Dissent from us, how this great Duty of Teaching the People the Law of God, is perform'd in your Assemblies, and to compare your Practice in this Point with the Scripture-Rules and Examples: Which I shall do with the same Candour and Integrity that I have hitherto endeavour'd to observe.

I. And here I must needs say, that your Teachers seem to have had very little Regard either to Scripture-Rules or Examples in framing this part of your Worship, having laid aside all those Methods of Instruction that the Scriptures recommend to us, except it be that of Exposition and Exhortation; which among you is called *Preaching*: Inasmuch, that tho' a Man frequent your Meetings all his Life, yet he has no Security, or hardly possibility of Learning, from your publick Teachings, all the great Mysteries of his Religion, or the necessary Principles of his Faith.

1. For first, your Preachers are entirely left to their choice what place of Scripture they will explain, or what Subject they will handle: And hence it happens, that hardly any one Man in his Life ever goes through the necessary Articles of Faith, or of Practice, in his publick Sermons; and for the Truth of this, I appeal to your selves.

2. You have no Summary of Principles enjoined to be either Read or Taught in your publick Assemblies. A *Catechism* you have, but neither your *Directory* nor *Practice* make it any part of your *Lord's-Day-Service*: And besides, your *Catechism* is such, that it no ways answers the Design of a *Form of sound Words*. I have already shewed, that such a *Form* should contain only the first and necessary Principles of the *Oracles of God*, in such Words and Methods as may make it easily apprehended and retained by the Weak and Unlearned, which make up the bulk of the People. But your *Catechism* is full of *Hard Words*, *School Terms*, and *Abstruse Notions*, no-wise necessary to be known by the generality of Christians, or possible to be understood by Children, or unlearned Persons, for whose Edification principally a *Catechism* ought to be contrived. Besides all this, it is so long and intricate, even the *Shorter*, that no one Child in ten ever gets it by heart,

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heart, nor one in five hundred retains it, as I have found by Experience, and desire that you would judge of this Matter as you find upon Trial. Lastly, after all, it is imperfect; some of the Principles of the *Apostles Catechism* being quite left out of it, I mean *laying on of Hands*, joined with *Baptism*, Heb. vi. 2. A great Defect sure in a *Catechism*, to leave out a Fundamental of Christianity.

II. But the most sad and deplorable Defect of your Performance of this Duty, is your casting out the Reading of the *Word of God* from most of your publick Assemblies, directly contrary to *God's Institution* and *Ordinance* for the *Instruction* of his Church; in-somuch, that in many of your Meetings, setting aside a Verse or two for a *Text*, or *Quotation* at the Discretion of the *Teacher*, the Voice of *God* is never publickly heard amongst them. This is Matter of Fact, and undeniable; and in all the Meetings in the *North of Ireland* in a whole Year, perhaps there is not so much Scripture read, as in one Day in Our Church, by the strictest enquiry which I could make. One would think this alone were sufficient to shew the People where the *Worship of God* is to be found in its Purity, and to prove Our Assemblies to be the *True Church of God*, against all that come in Competition with us; whereof some hide the *Word of God* in a strange Language, and others banish it out of their Meetings. It being in Our Congregation only, that the Voice of *God* is heard speaking to his People, without Cover or Gloss. Sure it is a sad Thing, that a Man may go to most Meetings many Years, and never hear one entire Chapter read in them. Now this Omission is the more inexcusable in you, and must render you manifestly self-condemned.

I. First, Because you so vehemently press the Necessity of *Preaching*, and quote the *Holy Scriptures* to prove it: In which, Reading the *Law* (as is shewed

before) is termed *Preaching*, *Acts* xv. 21. but interpreting the Scriptures, applying them, or exhorting the Congregation from them, in a fixed Christian Auditory, (which you count *Preaching*) is never call'd so in the whole New Testament. Therefore, by laying aside the Reading the Scriptures in your publick Assemblies, you have entirely cast aside *Preaching*, in the proper Scripture Sense of it. But,

2. This must render you self-condemned, because you pretend to honour the Holy Scriptures above other Christians : Your Mouths, commendably and with just reason, are continually full of the Praises of the Holy Bible ; you own it, with the generality of the Reformed Churches, for the only sufficient Rule of Faith ; you appeal to it, and seem to found your selves on it : And yet your not allowing the Reading of it a constant place in your religious Assemblies, makes it seem as if you had a very low Opinion of it in your Hearts. If you really value it as you profess, why do you banish the Reading of it from your publick Worship, to make room for Discourses, Lectures, and Sermons of your own Teachers ? Remember of whom it is said, *Mark* vii. 6. *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me.* While you thus juggle the Word of God out of your solemn Meetings, to make room for your own Sermons, I beseech you to consider whether this be not a laying aside the Commandments of God, for Men's Inventions ; unless you will call your *Sermons* (as some *Quakers* are said to do) as much the *Word of God* as the Bible.

III. I look on this as so material a Point, and conceive the *Honour of the Holy Scriptures* and the *Salvation of Christians* to be so deeply concerned in it, that I think my self obliged to examine the Pretences I have found to justify it : Tho' I confess, they

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they seem to me so weak, that I am afraid I shall be almost suspected, by indifferent Persons, not to do Justice in representing them: For it is unaccountable, that any Body should urge so *slight Reasons* for so *considerable an Omission*: And yet these are all I have ever met with, or heard from you.

The first Reason I have heard urg'd, is, *That the People are obliged to read the Scriptures at Home; and being thus acquainted with them, the Reading of them is not necessary in their publick Meetings.* But to this I answer;

1. That we see, from what has been said, That the Reading of the *Holy Scriptures* is by *God's Appointment* a part of his *solemn publick Worship*; therefore to leave it out in our *Assemblies*, on any *Pretence whatsoever*, is to lay aside his *Command*, and so to corrupt and dismember his *Worship*.

2. The private Performance of a Duty, ought by no means to interfere with, or hinder the Publick. We must pray to *God*, praise Him, and instruct our Families in Private; and yet *God* forbid that our doing these *privately*, should banish the Use of them from our *publick Assemblies*; or that any one should think himself excused from attending on the publick Performance of them, on Account of his private Diligence in them: And the same Rule holds for Reading the *Holy Scriptures*.

3. *God* tells the Children of *Israel*, Deut. vi. 6. *That these Words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up—and thou shalt write them on the posts of thy house.* Here is as much private Diligence in Reading and Teaching the Law required of the *Israelites*, as any Christian can pretend to exercise; and yet all this Care to preserve the Knowledge of the Law by private Study

and Exercise, did not make the Reading it in their Synagogues unnecessary, or prevent God from requiring them to use it as a part of his publick Worship, *Deut. xxxi. 11.* And therefore all your Diligence in Reading the Scriptures privately, or *Your Teachers* exhorting and requiring you to do it, ought not to warrant *Their* or *Your* dispensing with the *Command of God*, that appoints the Reading his *Word*, as a part of his publick Service. But,

4. When People are left to themselves in private, they may either do, or not do a Thing as they please: And we are assured, That there are many who come to Church, and hear the *Word of God* read there, that neither can, nor ever would be at the pains to read it in private. It is therefore a great Temptation to the People, to be Negligent; and a great want of Care in a Church, to leave so material a Thing as *the Reading of the Word of God*, to private Diligence. We find by Experience, that where no publick effectual Care is taken to inform the generality of Men, the *Knowledge of God's Word* sensibly decays, and is in a fair way to be lost. The *Papists* read the Scriptures in a Language that the People do not understand; and we see into what gross Ignorance they are fallen by this Means. Those of *your Persuasion* (generally speaking) do not read them at all in *your Meetings*; and the Consequence of this is, That *many of your common People* are strangers to the very History of the Bible, and the first Principles of Christianity; as I have found on Trial, to my great Trouble and Astonishment. This Pretence therefore of *People's Reading the Holy Scriptures in private*, will by no means justify you, for breaking God's Command, in omitting the publick Reading them as a part of God's Service in the Congregations.

The second Pretence that I have met with for this Omission, is, That *since the penning of the Scriptures, and settling of the Church by the Apostles, the Case is*
much

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much altered with Christians ; That Printing was not then known, and consequently Copies of the Bible were few, and hard to come by : Few could then read them if they had them, and therefore (say some) Reading the Scriptures in the Assemblies was then absolutely necessary, otherwise the generality must have been strangers to them : But now Copies of the Bible, by means of Printing, are become common, and easie to be had, and most Families have some in them that can read : And therefore the publick Reading them is not now necessary.

1. The plain Answer to this is, First, That the Reading the Scriptures publickly, is an *Institution of God* : Therefore to lay it aside on the account of the Invention of Printing, is in effect to say, That Men have found out a better way to propagate the Knowledge of *God's Word*, than He instituted ; and plainly to lay aside his *Command*, for Men's own *Invention*.

2. God has promised, that there shall be always *Religious Assemblies*, and has commanded his *Word* to be read in them, which is a certain Means to preserve the Knowledge thereof, as long as there is a Church ; but He has no where promised the constant commonness of Bibles, nor ability to People to read them at Home. To omit therefore the *Institution of God for teaching his Word*, and to rely on People's procuring and reading Copies of the Bible privately, is to leave God's Way, and presumptuously depend on that which has no Promise annexed to it.

3. How easie soever we may imagine the obtaining Copies of the Bible, and notwithstanding the Number of those that can read, there are still many Families even amongst *Protestants*, that can neither compass a Bible, nor get any to read it, if they had one ; and therefore this Expedient is no ways sufficient to supply the *Design of God's Institution*, in commanding it to be read publickly.

4. Let us suppose Bibles to be as common as we can desire, and that every one can read them; yet who will secure us that they will do it? People, whilst the first Fervour of a Reformation is on them, may perhaps be diligent so long as the Scripture is a Novelty to them, or Zeal for a Party inspires them; but when this wears off, as it generally does in a little time, we see by Experience that their Care of Reading and Meditating in the Scriptures decays with it; and there are at this Day *too many* of all Parties that neither read themselves, nor hear one Chapter read in a whole Year, except at Church. And therefore to omit the publick reading them, on presumption that the People will do it themselves, since it is so easie for them to do it, is the *ready way* to introduce an Universal Ignorance of *God's Word*, and reduce us again to *Popery*; the most effectual Bar against which, is the Bible in our own Language.

5. People may be obliged to come to the publick Congregations, and hear the *Word of God* read, though they have no Inclination to it; and when they neglect, they may be reprov'd, or punished: But this is not Practical, when the Scriptures are required only to be read in private Families. Experience shews us that there is great difference between these two Methods in point of Efficacy. We see in *England* and *Wales*, where publick Reading was practis'd, the People generally embraced the Reformation; but in *Ireland*, where the same Care was not taken, they rejected it. Had *God's Way* been taken, and the *Scriptures* as constantly read to the Native *Irish*, in a Language they understood, as it was in *England* or *Wales*, there is little doubt but the Reformation had succeeded as universally here, as it did there; but the want of this, has kept them in Ignorance to this Day; which may convince us how ineffectual all our Contrivances are to enlighten Men, in respect of *God's Institution*. I am persuaded,

ded, that if ever the *Native Irish* be brought to the Knowledge of *God's Word*, it must be by having it read to them publicly in a Language they understand, and not by thrusting Bibles privately into their Hands; of the ineffectualness of which, we have had an Experiment 150 Years.

6. But Lastly, Instead of all other Arguments, none of us are ignorant, that the *Word of God* cannot be presumed to have the same Efficacy when read privately, as it hath when read in the Assembly of *Christians*, according to God's Appointment; since he has given us a peculiar Promise to be present in such Assemblies. And there are no diligent *Hearers of the Word* publicly read, but are able from their own Experience to testify, that they often find it to have a different Force and Efficacy, when they hear it read as a part of his *Ordinance* in publick Assemblies, in which He has peculiarly promised his Presence, than when they read it in private by themselves.

The Third Pretence I have found alledged, for omitting the regular *reading the Bible* in your Meetings, is, *That it takes up too much Time, and is a hindrance to the more profitable Duty, of what you commonly call Preaching.*

1. I entreat you to consider, That there is a time for every Thing; and since *God* has appointed *reading his Word* a time and room in our publick Assemblies; Who are we, that we should presume to throw it out? This surely is to set up our selves against *God*, and to think that we are able to order Things better for the Edification of his Church, than He has done. Surely we ought rather to take care so to dispose our Sermons, that they may not interfere with any other *Institution of God*: But, that whatever Time we allow them, there may remain sufficient for *reading God's Holy Word*; which, I have proved, is in Scripture-language, *Preaching*;
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And therefore to juttle this out, to make our own Discourses longer, is plainly to prefer our Way of *Preaching* to *God's*. If there were a necessity that one or the other must be omitted, Modesty ought to teach us to omit our own Words, rather than *God's*.

2. Suppose that upon some extraordinary Occasion it may be *Lawful* to omit reading *God's Word* in our Assemblies, that we may have the more Time to manage a Discourse for the *Instruction* of the *People*, yet it can never be justifiable to make this a common Practice; which is to put a manifest Contempt on the *Word of God*.

A Fourth Pretence against Reading the *Scriptures* publickly in a regular Method, is, *That they are hard to be understood, or applied; and therefore only so much of them ought to be read at a time, as the Minister may explain and apply to his Auditory: And that one Verse thus applied, is better than many Chapters read without such Application.*

1. It is to be consider'd, First, That it is against the general Opinion of the *Reformed Churches*, who universally teach, That the *Scriptures* are plain, in all Things necessary to Salvation. And therefore there is not that universal Necessity of an Explanation of every place of Scripture that is to be read, as is pretended.

2. The *Holy Scriptures*, when heard with *Humility* and *Attention*, apply themselves better than any Man can do it. The *Words* of them are the *Words of God*, and they have a *plainness, force, and spirit* in them, which no Humane Eloquence can improve, and therefore it is a great Affront to them to say that they have little Efficacy except a Minister apply them.

3. Suppose one Verse well applied to be better than many Chapters (for which there is no Colour,) yet this would not justify the omission of Reading them

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them publickly ; for no *Application* can be so well made of them whilst People are not thoroughly acquainted with them. It ought therefore to be our first care to read them to the *People* often and solemnly, that they may be acquainted with the whole Body of them, and then one Word of *Application* may do more good than many Sermons to People not so prepared with the general Knowledge of them.

The *literal* Knowledge of the Will of *God* must always go before the *saving*, and is the best *Introduction* to it. Now the Reading the *Law* in the Ears of the People, is the Means appointed by *God* to teach them that *literal* Knowledge ; and therefore while *your Teachers* have laid aside this Means of *God's Appointment*, they have in a great measure debarred People of the *spiritual* and *saving* Knowledge of his *Will*.

4. Fourthly, Reading a Verse or two, and trusting to the Minister's *Application*, without the People's being acquainted with the whole Body of the Scriptures, does put Christians too much in the power of their *Teachers*, and makes them liable to be seduced by them. This is the very Artifice whereby the *Romish* Priests keep their People in Ignorance ; and *your Teachers* using the same Method (while it is manifest that so great a part of their People either do not or cannot read them at Home) seems too like a Design on their *Hearers*, and tempts the World to suspect that they are afraid of the naked Simplicity of the Scriptures, since they dare not trust their People with *Hearing* them publickly read, except they add their own Glosses to them.

The Fifth Pretence that I have met with, for laying aside the publick Reading the *Word of God*, is, *That the dead Letter* (as some call it) *is a dull formal thing, without Spirit or Life, where it is not applied to the Souls of Men, by the Spirit of God speaking in his*
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Ministers ; and that without such Assistance, the Scriptures have little Efficacy on the Heart.

I hope there are few of any Communion will own this Pretence, since it is so horrid a Reflection and Affront on the *Word of God*. I will, however, in answer to it, offer these following Considerations.

1. That the *Holy Scriptures* give a Character of themselves very different from this. They represent the *Word of God*, as the *Sword of the Spirit*, as quick and powerful, as able to make a Man wise to Salvation, as giving *Wisdom to the Simple*, as converting the Soul, with many other Expressions to denote the Efficacy thereof on the Hearts of Men ; and therefore to reflect on the *Word*, as dull and formal, as a meer dead Letter that cannot engage the Attention of the Hearers, or reach their Hearts, is too near Blasphemy.

2. We are certain that God speaks to us immediately by his *Holy Spirit* in his *Word* : And where the *Spirit of God* is, there is Power. But when Men speak their own Words, or pretend to apply the Words or Passages of Scripture, tho' they seem to do it with the greatest Zeal and Learning, yet they may be mistaken ; nay, they may deceive us : And therefore wholly to lay aside the immediate Dictates of the *Holy Ghost* recorded in the Scriptures, for any pretended *Explication* or *Application* made by Men, is manifestly to exchange God's undoubted Words and Command, for what may be a meer *Humane Invention*.

3. 'Tis to be considered, That the People have always been apt to grow weary of the Service of God in the way of his own appointment, and complain of it, as dull and tedious ; so *Mal. i. 13. Ye said also, what a weariness is it, and ye snuffed at it.* And the Reason is, because the Way of God's appointing is always more Spiritual, in respect of that which

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which is of Man's own *Invention*, and therefore it cannot be so easie or agreeable to the carnal Minds of Men.

4. It ought therefore to be considered by you, when People complain of being dull, and unaffected, by meer *Hearing the Word of God* read, whether this do not truly proceed from a carnal and wicked Heart estranged from the *Spirit of God*; and whether the reason that Sermons please, and affect more than a Chapter out of the *Bible*, be not the Novelty and outward Ornaments of them, rather than the Spirituality of the Discourse. We are sure St. Paul supposeth such as are not affected with the *Words of God*, to be meer natural or carnal Men, 1 Cor. ii. 13. where having taken notice of speaking, *Not in words, which Man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*; he adds, *But the natural Man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.* From whence it clearly follows, that the reason why Men do not understand or receive the Things of God delivered to them in the *Words of Scripture*, dictated by the *Holy Ghost*, is, because they are meer natural Men, and want the *Spirit of God*. Whoever therefore is more affected, or delights more in a Sermon than in a Chapter of the *Bible*, has reason to look into his Heart, and examine himself whether he have the *Spirit of God*. Those mention'd in Scripture that had that *Spirit*, delighted in the *Law of God*: It was the Joy of their Hearts; they preferred it to all Things, they meditated in it *Day and Night*; and were so far from turning out of their publick Assemblies, that the *Hearing* it read was a great part of their Worship. Whoever therefore lays aside this Practice, have reason to suspect that they want that *Temper* and *Spirit* with which those *Holy Men* were inspired; and notwithstanding all their Pretences to a more than

than ordinary Spiritualness and Reformation, are little advanced above the Natural Men, that neither receive or relish the Things of God, at least not as they ought.

I find it alledged as a *Sixth Pretence* for not *Reading the Word of God* in your Meetings, *That a Child may read them, and perform this Duty; and then what need it take up the Minister's time?*

To which there need no other Answer, than that the Service of God is not less His, or the less to be valued because it is easie. On the contrary, 'tis the more sinful to neglect it, the more easie it is. Ministers are not set a-part for difficult Things only, which others cannot perform; but they are to execute the Office that God has imposed on them, whether it be easie or difficult. As for Example: God has commanded his Ministers to *Baptize, In the Name of the Father, &c.* Now to pour on Water in this *Form* is no such difficult Thing, but a Child, or any else might perform it: Neither is there any greater difficulty in the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, as to the *Essentials* of it. Yet I suppose it will be granted by all, that it belongs only to the Ministers Office to perform these, and they must not delegate them, or any part of them to others, or omit them because they are easie; and that they have a quite different Sacredness, Efficacy and Force, when performed by a Person Ordained and Authorized to this Purpose, than when performed by another: And the same Rule holds in offering up our Prayers, and in *Reading the Scriptures*: A Man may read them at Home, a Child may read them in Church, but they have not the same assurance of Efficacy, and a Blessing, as when they come from the Mouth of a Person set a-part by God's Ordinance for this Purpose.

I make no doubt but the Experience (as I have said) of most Christians, from what they have felt
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in their own Hearts in *Hearing the Word of God* publickly read, will attest the Truth of this. Now if you, my Friends, know and own this, as I hope the generality of you do, you must see the Unreasonableness of this Pretence. If any of you do not know it, you must give me leave to say, that I fear it is from Ignorance, and not considering the *Scriptures*. And 'tis your *Teachers* Duty to inform you better. *Reading the Scripture* being allowed by their *Directory* to be a part of *God's* publick Worship. We have this Rule there, in exprefs Words, *That it is requisite that all the Canonical Books be read over in order, that the People may be better acquainted with the whole Body of Scriptures*. Now if you can shew but one Meeting in the last Age, in which this has been duly performed, we will not accuse you so generally of violating *God's* Command in this Point; but if there be not one such Meeting, you ought to consider how you will excuse your selves before God. And I think it necessary here to observe to you, how insignificant general Rules are, without descending to a particular Determination of Circumstances. Here we have in your *Directory* a general Rule (such as it is) for *Reading the Scripture*: But for want of being Particular, as the *Calendar* in our *Common-Prayer-Book* is, I question if it yet was ever once observed, or indeed that it is *Practical* to observe it. And it is so almost in every other general Rule; and therefore to leave the Service of God to be Ordered by such general Rules only, is in effect to *Teach* People to neglect it.

V. These are all the *Reasons* that I can possibly think of, or have heard urged for *Your* Practice in this Point: I will not say but others may be pretended, but I must profess that I do not remember to have met with them; if I had, I would have given them a due Consideration: I am persuaded that they cannot be of greater force than those I have

have examined : And that they can never excuse *You* in this Matter, from manifest Breach of *God's Command*, in preferring *Men's Invention* to his *Institution*,

After all, I must profess to *You*, That I look on all these to be only Pretences ; and that the true Reason of Men's Negligence in this *Duty*, is given us, *2 Tim. iv. 3. For the time will come* (saith the Apostle) *when they will not endure sound Doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap up to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears.* An *itching Ear* here, can signifie nothing so properly, as an Ear that loves *Novelty* and *Variety* : Because therefore our Church gives the People little that is New, in her *Prayers*, or *Reading the Scriptures*, but retains a *Form of sound Words* in the one, and the plain *Word of God* in the other : Hence it is that some People cannot endure our Service, but heap up to themselves *Teachers*, that, instead of the *Praises, Prayers* and *Sermons* of *God's immediate Appointment*, will gratifie them every Meeting with a *New Prayer*, without troubling them with such *Prayers* or *Sermons* as they think *old*, which are incomparably better, only the *itching Ears* of the People, as the Apostle foretold, are pleased with the *Novelty* and *Variety* of the one, and disgust the *Reputation* of the other, as the *Israelites* did that of *Angels Food*, *Pf. lxxviii. 25. Numb. xxi. 5. and xi. 6.*

It is the Duty of all Ministers, and the Business of the truly Conscientious, to check and curb this Humour in the People ; and notwithstanding all Discouragements, the Ministers of *Our Church*, instead of complying with them, have constantly reprov'd them for their Negligence and Levity, where they found them guilty. But as *Aaron*, to please the *Israelites*, made the *Golden Calf* ; so some *Ministers* (tho' contrary to their own Principles) have chang'd *God's Institution*, to please *their People* ; and left out the

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the constant and regular Reading of *God's Word*, because their People grew weary of it. But let all Men judge who behave themselves most like the *Ministers of Christ*; We, who keep to the *Reading God's Word*, according to *His own Institution*, whether the People will Hear or forbear; or, They that *comply with them*, and lay aside *God's Command*, to oblige and gain them.

CHAP. IV.

OF BODILY WORSHIP.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning it.

I. **T**HE Fourth Part of the publick Worship of God, or Design of Religious Assemblies, is Visible or *Bodily Adoration*; such amongst us, are *Uncovering the Head*, *Bowing*, *Kneeling*, and other outward Signs of *Reverence* and *Submission*, by which we openly acknowledge the *Mercy*, the *Justice*, and *Power* of God, and express the inward Sense we have of these Attributes.

In treating of this Head, I will keep my self to the same *Method* as in the former; and consider, First, The *Rules* and *Examples* that the *Scriptures* afford us for the Performance of this Duty. Secondly, Compare the *Practice* of our Church with them. Thirdly, Examine the *Dissenters Practice*, and the *Reasons* alledge for it.

1. As to the First of these, we find a *positive Command* of God, for *Bodily Worship* in Publick, *Psal.* xcvi. 6. *O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* The Second Verse of

this *Psalms* plainly shews us, that this is meant of publick Worship : *Let us come before his presence with Thanksgiving.* And that this bowing or kneeling is to be interpreted *literally*, not *figuratively*, appears from the same Verses, where *singing, Thanksgiving, and Psalms*, are all *literally* to be understood ; and there is no more reason for understanding *bowing* and *kneeling* in a figurative Sense, than the other.

II. The same *Bodily Worship* is required by the Second Commandment, which forbids us to *bow down to a graven Image*, by which words we are commanded to *bow down* to God ; for it is confessed by all, and laid down as a Rule by the *Assemblies larger Catechism*, *That the Negative Commandments include in them the contrary Positive* ; that is to say, When a Commandment forbids us any Thing, it requires us to perform the Duty contrary to what is forbidden. As for Example : When the First Commandment forbids us to *have any other Gods before the Lord*, it requires us to own and worship Him for our only God : And after the same manner all other Commands are to be interpreted. By which Rule, when the Second Commandment, *Exod. xx. 5.* forbids us in these words, *Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them*, it requires us to practise the contrary Duties in our Addresses to God. To *bow down to Him, and serve Him* ; that is, to worship Him both with the Worship of our *Bodies* and *Minds* : Therefore as he that either *bows* or *kneels*, or uses any posture of Reverence to a *graven Image*, breaks the Second Commandment ; so doth he who on occasion of publick Worship either *refuses* or *neglects* to use some such posture to God. It being a Contempt of God, and contrary to His Commands, to pray to Him, for Instance, without some Posture of Adoration to Him, when we can do it, as well as it is a Sin to *kneel* to an *Image*, without *Praying* to it, which the *Papists* pretend to do ; the one is *Idolatry*, and the other

Sacri-

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Sacrilege : For the Reason why we are not to bow down to an *Idol*, is, because 'tis an Act of *Worship* due to God. And whether we give what is due to Him to an *Image*, or refuse to pay it to Himself, we are equally Robbers of God, we deny Him his *Honour*, and are guilty of *Sacrilege*.

I wish all concerned, may seriously consider and amend their Practice in this Particular.

III. But the Practice of *Holy Men*, and of the *Church of God* in Scripture, are the best Interpreters of *God's Commands*; and from them we may learn what he requires or approves in his *Worship*. Now through the whole *Old Testament* we shall never find any one *sitting* at his *Devotions*; but on all Occasions of *Worship*, especially in *publick Assemblies*, the *People of God* stood, kneeled, bowed, or prostrated themselves. 'Tis said, indeed, 2 *Sam.* vii. 8. that *King David then went and sate before the Lord*: But here the Original word is capable of another Signification, and may as well be translated, that he *remained, stayed, or abode* before the Lord; and accordingly it is thus translated in other places of Scripture, particularly *Gen.* xxii. 5. and xxiv. 55. and xxix. 19. 1 *Kings* xii. 2. This place therefore is no Exception against that Practice which is so evident through the whole *Old Testament*, that *Holy Men* worshipped God with their *Bodies*, as well as with their *Minds*.

IV. We shall find the same practised by our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, in the *New Testament*. Our *Saviour* undoubtedly is the *best Example* we can propose to our selves for the *Worship of God*, and we ought to imitate what he did and approved. Now if we consider the *Worship* he offered to his Father, we shall find him addressing himself to him with *Bowing the Body*, with *Kneeling and Prostration*, as well as with *strong Cries and Tears*; so *Mat.* xxvi. 39. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed,

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O my Father, &c. and *Luke xxii. 41. He kneeled down and prayed.* And as he paid this Bodily Worship to God, so he accepted the same from Men when he was on Earth: Thus the Wise Men worshipped him in his Cradle, *Mat. ii. 11. When they saw the young Child, and his Mother Mary, they fell down, &c.* Thus they that desired to be Cured by him, addressed themselves to him, *Mark v. 22. When he saw him, he fell at his feet, and besought, &c.* And after the same manner, those who were Cured by him, returned him Thanks, *Luke xvii. 16.* Thus his beloved *Mary* came into his Presence, *John xi. 32.* And *Mat. xxviii. 9. They held him by the Feet, and worshipped him.* Our Saviour looked on this Bodily Worship to be so indispensably his due, that he accepted of it from the very Devils, and they durst not forbear to pay it to him, *Mark iii. 11. And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, thou art the Son of God.* And thus the very Heathen, as well as his Disciples, approached him, even whilst he was in his state of Humiliation.

And that we may not be tempted to think that our Saviour admitted this *Bodily Worship* to be paid Him only whilst he was *bodily* present, we may observe *St. Stephen* presents his *Prayrr* with the same Posture, *Act. vii. 60. He kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.*

V. The Scriptures represent to us the First Christians thus glorifying God with their Bodies, (as *St. Paul* expressly commands us, *1 Cor. vi. 20.*) in the publick Assemblies, as we may learn from *1 Cor. xiv. 23.* where the *Apostle* speaking of a Heathen coming into the Assembly of Christians, and being convinced, addeth, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God. If it had not been the Custom for Christians to do thus, it would never have been expected from a Heathen, or reckoned an Argument of his Conviction. If the Church Triumphant in Heaven may be

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be allowed a fit Pattern to us of what is decent in the *Worship* of God, we find them paying this *Bodily Worship* to God, *Rev. vii. 11. And all the Angels stood about the Throne, and about the Elders, and about the Beasts, and fell on their Faces before the Throne and worshipped God*; so *Chap. iv. 10. and xix. 4.* And the same we find practised by the Church on Earth, *Act. xxi. 5. where St. Paul, and the Church of Tyre, kneeled down on the shore and prayed.* After the same manner he took his leave of the *Elders of Ephesus, Act. xx. 36. He kneeled down and prayed with them all.* So constantly are *Bodily Worship* and *Prayer* joined together, that *bowing the Knee*, sometimes signifies *Prayer*, *Eph. iii. 14. For this Cause I bow my Knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

VI. The Scriptures represent this *Bodily Worship* as the most proper external Act of Adoration: If we look into the Scriptures, we shall not find *Praying, Praising, Reading the Scriptures, or Administering the Sacraments*, termed *Worship*; they are indeed *Duties* which we are obliged to perform to the Honour of God, but not immediate direct Act of *Worship*, properly so called: For *Worship* is properly the subjection of our Minds to God; and that is a proper Act of *External Worship*, which directly signifies this Subjection or Submission of our Minds: But *Prayer* signifies our desires of good Things from God, and only indirectly our subjection to Him; *Praises*, immediately signify the Sense we have of God's Excellencies, and only by Consequence, our Submission; *Reading the Scriptures* is a Means of *Instruction*, and tends to bring us to submit to God, but does not directly express it. And the *Sacraments* primarily signify God's Grace to us, rather than our Submission to Him. All these may in a large Sense, upon very good Grounds, be look'd upon as Parts of *Worship*, because they do imply such Submission; but *bending or bowing the Body*, is that which is properly in

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Scripture call'd *Worship*, as signifying immediately and naturally, the *bending* and *submission* of our Souls, and nothing else.

In the *Old Testament*, the Words rendred *Worship*, signifie properly and originally to *bow down* or *prostrate the Body*. This is the proper signification of וָיִשָּׁק and of נָשָׁק, the latter of which in the *Second Commandment* is render'd to *bow down*; and very often, when the Original has, *they bowed down themselves*, the Translators render it, *they Worshipped*; so *Psal.* xcv. 5. and *Jer.* i. 16. *And worshipped the work of their own hands*; in the Original 'tis, *They bowed themselves down to the work*, &c. *Gen.* xxiv. 52. *He worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the Earth*; the Original has no more, but, *He bowed himself to the Earth to the Lord*, so *Psal.* xcv. 5. And the same holds generally through the whole *Old Testament*; from whence it follows, that in the Opinion of our Translators, to *bow one's self to the Earth*, is that proper Act which they call *Worship*. And hence the whole *Worship of God* is signified by *bowing before him*, *Micah.* vi. 6. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the High God?* that is, *How shall I Worship him acceptably?*

Asto the *New Testament*, the Word generally there rendred *Worship*, properly signifies a *Bodily Action*: Πέεξκωρεω, is originally, to pay *Homage* by a *Kiss*; as we now kiss the King's Hand, which usually was done *Kneeling*; And hence *kneeling* and *worshipping* signifie the same Thing in the *New Testament*, and the one is put for the other: Thus *Mat.* viii. 2. *There came a Leper and worshipped him.* The same Person is said (*Mark* i. 40.) to come *beseeking him, and kneeling to him.* Of the *Canaanitish Woman* it is said (*Mat.* xv. 23.) *That she came and worshipped him.* And *Mark* says, (*Chap.* vii. 25.) *She came and fell at his Feet.* *Luke* says of the Man among the Tombs, that he *fell down before him*, (*Chap.* viii. 28.) *Mark,*
that

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that *He worshipped him*, (*Chap. v. 6.*) Of *Jarus*, *Mark* and *Luke* say, that *He fell down at his Feet*: *Matthew*, that *he worshipped him*, (*Luke viii. 40. Mark v. 22. Mat. ix. 18.*) so promiscuously do the *Evangelists* use the Words *kneeling*, or *falling down*, and *worshipping*, to signify the same Thing. Whence we may learn, that when any is said to *Worship Christ* visibly, by it is meant they *kneeled to him*. And when we are commanded to *Worship God* in the *Congregation*; the meaning is, that we are required to express the Submission of our Minds, by *bowing our selves*, or *kneeling unto him*. Hence the very *Soldiers* that in derision *bowed their Knees* to *Christ*, are said to *Worship him*, *Mark xv. 19.* And *St. John*, *Rev. xxii. 8.* when he would worship the *Angel*, *fell before his Feet*: To which the *Angel* replied, *See thou do it not — worship God*. From which Text it clearly follows, that *falling down* is an Act of *Worship*, and that we are commanded by the Mouth of an *Angel* to pay it to *God*.

VII. We find in Scripture some Act of this *Bodily Worship* accompanying every Religious Performance. Thus *Prayers* are generally offered with *Kneeling*, and that so constantly (as is observed before) that to *bow the Knee*, in Scripture-Language, is to *Pray*. Thus *Praises*, *Thanksgivings*, and *Confessions* of Faith, are offered *standing*, *1 King. viii. 14.* And the *King* turned his Face about, and *blessed all the Congregation of Israel* (and all the *Congregation of Israel* stood) and he said, *Blessed be the Lord*, &c. the same Posture is observed, *ver. 55. 2. 2 Chron. xx. 19.* And the *Levites* — stood up to praise the *Lord God of Israel* with a loud Voice, *2 Chron. xxix. 26. Nehem. x. 40.* And this was not a voluntary Act, but imposed on the People, as appears from *Nehem. ix. 5.* Then the *Levites* — said, *Stand up, and bless the Lord your God*, &c. In Conformity to which, the *Saints* and *Angels* in *Heaven* are represented to us thus praising *God*, *Rev. vii. 9.*

They stood before the Throne, and before the Lamb — and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation, &c. At Reading the Holy Scriptures, both Reader and People used the same Posture, as appears from Nehem. viii. 4, 5. And Ezra the Scribe stood on a Pulpit of Wood— And Ezra opened the Book, and all the People stood up. And chap. ix. 3. And they stood up in their place, and read in the Book: Which our Saviour likewise observed, Luke iv. 16.

Lastly, They offered their Sacrifices with Bodily Adoration, 2 Chron. xxix. 27. *And when the Burnt-offerings began, the Song of the Lord began also — And all the Congregation worshipped, and the Singers sang, and the Trumpets sounded; and all this continued until the Burnt-Offering was finished. The Word, as was observed, here rendred worshipped, signifies literally, they bowed themselves down; and the meaning is, They continued prostrate, or kneeling, whilst the Burnt-Offering was offered. Thus in every Religious Performance, the Scripture has taken particular notice, and recorded to us, with what Acts of Bodily Worship it was offered up unto God.*

S E C T. II.

The Practice of Our Church in Bodily Worship.

LET us, in the next Place, compare our own Practice with this Representation, and see how we perform this part of Visible Worship in our Church.

1. First then, When we come into the Publick Assemblies, we believe our selves to come into Christ's Presence; because he has promised, *Mat. xviii. 21. Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them: And therefore in Obedience to the Commands of God in Scripture; 'Tis our Custom to lift up our Hearts*
to

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to him in Prayer, and bow our Bodies before him : This bowing our Bodies when we come into the Assembly of Christians met together in Christ's Name, and for his Service, though it be not enjoined by any Constitution of our Church, is generally practised by good People, as very decent in it self, and edifying to others. Our bowing our Bodies therefore at our coming into a Christian Assembly for Worship, is only to pay that *Bodily Worship* to God that he requires from us when we come into his peculiar Presence, which Presence he has promised in such Assemblies. Some indeed are so weak as to term our thus *worshipping God*, a *bowing to the Altar* : Whereas our Church expressly declaring against any *Adoration* to be paid to the Consecrated *Bread* and *Wine*, does much more declare against doing it to the *Altar*.

II. *Uncovering the Head* is a Mark of Respect amongst us ; and therefore we continue uncovered whilst the Assembly lasts ; that is, whilst we are in Christ's Presence. The Custom of the Eastern Church was to *Uncover their Feet* in the Presence of God ; so *Moses* and *Joshua* were commanded to do ; (to which *Solomon* alludes, *Eccles. v. i.*) This was easily practised with them, because they wore nothing on their Feet but *loose Shoes* and *Sandals*, which was readily slipt off : And this continued till our *Saviour's* Time, as appears by their washing their Feet when they came into Houses, *Luke vii. 44.* *Uncovering the Head* is the same common Mark of Respect with us now, as *Uncovering the Feet* was with them in their Time : And this *Uncovering the Feet* being neither practicable with us, nor any Note of Respect amongst us, but rather the contrary, our Church has requir'd us, instead of it, to *uncover our Heads*, *Can. vii.*

For the Justification of this Practice, give me leave to digress so far as to explain one Passage in the
the

the *New Testament*, which seems to require that a Man should have his *Head uncovered* in the Presence of God, not as a Note of Respect, but of Privilege, *1 Cor. xi. 7. For a Man indeed ought not to cover his Head, forasmuch as he is the Image and Glory of God; but the Woman is the Glory of the Man.* Which Passage does not primarily relate to the covering the Head, but the Face, by a Veil, according to the Custom of the *Eastern Countries*: and this covering the Face, was a Note of Respect, as the contrary was a Note of Privilege: So we find that when *Rebecca* was to appear before her Husband (*Gen. xxiv. 65.*) *She took a Veil and covered her self.* So (*Exod. iii. 6.*) *Moses hid his Face, for he was afraid to look upon God; and Elijah wrapped his Face in his Mantle when he went out to meet God, (1 Kings xix. 13.)* On the same Account the *Seraphims* cover their Faces with their Wings, (*Isai. vi. 2.*) 'Tis therefore a peculiar Privilege and Favour to be allowed to appear before God *uncover'd*, and it is reckon'd as such, *2 Cor. ii. 18. But we all with open Face beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, &c.* Those that were out of Favour, might not appear bare-faced before their Prince, but with their *Heads covered*, as *Haman* was when the King signified his Displeasure against him, *Esther vii. 8.* Now for the understanding of the before-cited Place, we must consider that *Man* being the *Image and Glory of God*, is allowed to take this Confidence before God, which is denied to *Women*: For since *God* was pleased to make *Man* his *Image and Glory*, it is not fit that this his Glory should be covered before Him: But, on the other hand, it is fit that *Man's* Glory, which is *Woman*, should be covered before God. This, I conceive, is the full meaning of this Place, and has no relation to the manner of *uncovering the Head*, in use with us now; which is only a Mark of civil Respect, and that peculiar to Men, and not to Women. But
however,

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however, being an Honour paid to *Men*, there is no Reason why it should not be paid to *God*: On the contrary, it seems to be required by the Apostle's general Injunction, *Let all things be done decently*. And it is one of the Articles of our Church, *That the Church has Power to order Rites and Ceremonies*; that is, to determine what particular Things come under the Apostle's general Word of *Decency*.

3. We stand up at our *Praises, Thanksgivings, and Confessions of Faith*, in Conformity to the Examples of Holy Scripture.

4. At our Confessions of Sin, and at our Prayers, we present our selves before God on our Knees, by Order of our Church, according to the Example of our *Saviour* and the Church of *God*.

III. We Celebrate the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ in a *Worshipping* Posture. I know that many except against this. It would engage me in a longer Discourse to examine it fully; perhaps God may hereafter give me an Opportunity to discuss it at large; at present I shall only hint at the Scripture-Ground we have for it, and that by the following Deduction.

1. The *Altar* was of old the *Lord's Table*, from whence his Attendants were fed,

Mal. i. 7. Ye offer polluted Bread upon mine Altar, and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The Table of the Lord is contemptible.

The Author's Intention is not to assert, That the Scriptures require Kneeling at the Lord's Supper; but to shew

That it is not contrary to the Institution of Christ, or Practice of the Apostles, who compare our Receiving it with the Jews partaking of their Altar, to which they approached with Adoration.

2. On this account the *Israelites* came to the Altar, and worshipped before it, as being *God's Table*, on which the Sacrifice was presented as his Meat, of which they were permitted to partake: So

2 Chron.

2 Chron. vi. 12. *And he stood before the Altar of the Lord*—ver. 13. *And kneeled down on his knees*: And 1 Kings viii. 54. *He arose from before the Altar from kneeling on his Knees*. Nor can it be said, that this kneeling of Solomon, was only because he offered up a Prayer at that Time, and that therefore he was in a Praying Posture; for undoubtedly it was the Duty of all that were present at any Sacrifice, to offer up Prayers to God with the Sacrifice: And accordingly we find it commanded, 2 Kings xviii. 22. *Ye shall worship before this Altar in Jerusalem*; literally, *Ye shall bow down your selves*.

3. The Communion-Table is call'd the Lord's Table, 1 Cor. x. 21.

4. The Israelites partaking of the Altar, is proposed, as an Example for our partaking of the Lord's Table, 1 Cor. x. 16. *The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ*:—ver. 18. *Behold Israel after the Flesh: Are not they which eat of the Sacrifices partakers of the Altar?*

5. In Allusion to this Religious Eating with Bodily Worship, it is prophesied of our Saviour, Psal. xxii. 29. *All they that be fat upon Earth*, (that is, the favoured and happy Servants of God here, call'd, in ver. 20. *The Meek*) *shall eat and worship*.

Since then the Scripture sets forth to us a Religious Eating at the Lord's Table with Worship, and the Holy Communion is such an Eating at his Table, it follows that the Scripture Warrants our Worshipping when we Eat.

2. We are Commanded in Scripture to receive the Holy Eucharist in Remembrance of Christ's Death; and by it we shew his Death till he come. The same Scriptures Command us to Worship our Saviour; *For he is the Lord, and worship thou him*, Psal. xlv. 11. If ever then we are to Worship our Saviour, it is certainly

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certainly when we come to him in the nearest Approaches that we are capable of in this World, and with the highest Sense of Gratitude that our Souls can admit of; to remember and adore him for the greatest Act of Love that could be extended towards us, even laying down his Life for us, and partake of the Benefits thereof by feeding on him. If it be not our Duty to Worship him with our Bodies, as well as our Minds, on this occasion, it is hard to say when we are oblig'd to do it.

This Consideration prevail'd with the Protestant Church of Poland, to oblige all their Members to Receive kneeling, or standing, in Opposition to the *Sacramentarians*, who refused to pay any Worship to our Saviour, and therefore Celebrated his Supper sitting. The Words of their General Synod are these, *Corpus Confession*, p. 236.) *Quod attinet ad Ceremonias, &c.* "As to the Ceremonies of the Lord's Supper, the Decree sometime ago discuss'd in the Synod of Sandomir, and the Conclusion made and repeated in the General Synod of Cracow and Petrokow, is all approved in that Session of the Synod of Ulady-slaw, viz. This sitting at the Lord's Table shall not be used in any of the Churches of Poland or Lithuania, &c. of our Communion: For this Ceremony (tho' indifferent as others are) is not used by the Christian and Reformed Churches; and is proper to the Infidel *Arians* only, who place themselves in an equal Throne with the Lord. Since then sitting has crept into some of our Churches, chiefly by the Occasion and Countenance of those who have miserably fallen from us, and denied the Lord that bought us, we intreat and exhort all those Congregations, and our Brethren in the Lord, that they would change sitting, into the Ceremonies used by us Protestants in all the Reformed Churches of Europe, even that the Lord's Supper may be administered

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“ fted to the Communicants *standing, or kneeling,*
 “ (with a Proteftation againft *Bread-Worship* used
 “ by the Papifts) both which Rites (as they have
 “ been hitherto used in fome Churches) we leave
 “ free, and approve, without blaming or giving
 “ Offence to thofe who ufe either.” This Synod was
 held *June 19th. 1583.*

The Synod of *Petrokow*, above-mention’d, (held
June 1, 2, 3, 1578. pa. 234.) expreffes it felf in
 thefe Words ; “ Becaufe thofe Traiterous Fugitives
 “ from us to *Arianifm*, who change all Things in
 “ the Church, pretending to imitate Chrift, with-
 “ out Difcretion, were the firft Author’s amongft
 “ us of *Sitting at the Lord’s Table*, contrary to the
 “ Rites used in all the Reformed Churches through-
 “ out *Europe* ; Therefore we reject this Ceremo-
 “ ny, as proper to them who treat as well Chrift
 “ as his Sacraments irreverently, as indecent and
 “ irreligious, and very offensive to well meaning
 “ People.

It ought to be obferved, That this Church reck-
 ons *Sitting a Ceremony* ; and a Ceremony of an ill Sig-
 nification and Original, and not used by any Prote-
 ftant Church in their Time.

IV. But I find moft People acknowledge the
 Reasonablenefs of this ; and grant, if it were left
 to us how we would *Receive*, that we ought to do
 it with Adoration : But, fay they, *Obedience is bet-
 ter than Sacrifice* ; we are commanded to do what
 Chrift did, and he instituted, and his Difciples re-
 ceived it, in a Table-Posture ; and therefore fo
 ought we, notwithstanding the Scriptures, Rea-
 son, and Decency, feem to recommend another
 Posture to us.

Now to this Argument, which is the only one I
 find brought from Scripture, and which feems to
 prevail with moft, I Answer,

I. That

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1. That we are not required, nor is it convenient to imitate all that Christ did : Neither the Time, nor the Number of Receivers, nor the Posture, being Obligatory to us ; as appears from St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 23. who having occasion to mention *what he received of the Lord*, concerning this Sacrament, mentions only our Saviour's *taking Bread, giving Thanks, and Breaking it* ; and then saying, *Take, Eat ; this is my Body, &c.* without the Circumstances of the Number of Receivers, his Posture, or being at Supper. Nay, that we may not think that this had any relation to a Common Supper, or the Circumstances of it, he observes, that *Supper was done when he took the Cup*. Our Saviour's Posture therefore, whatever it was, is no wise Obligatory to us, it not being any part of what St. Paul professes to have received from Christ concerning this Sacrament.

2. I have already proved, That Religious Eating was accompanied with *Bodily Worship* ; and therefore if it were granted, that we were obliged to receive this Sacrament in a Table-Posture, from the Example of our Saviour ; yet it would not follow, that we should not receive it Kneeling. 'Tis certain, our Saviour did not *Sit*, but *Lie* at Table, when he did eat his usual Meals. Suppose then he had obliged us to his Posture of Eating, we ought to Lie, as he did ; but none assert the Necessity of our doing so, or practise this Way. Since then all Parties change it, sure we do better, that change it into the Religious Way of Eating recommended to us in the Scriptures, with Adoration, than others, that change our Saviour's Way into Sitting, the Common way of our Eating.

3. We have this further to say for our Practise, That our Saviour was not at a Common Supper when he instituted this Sacrament, but at the Passover ; which was a Sacramental Eating, and had a peculiar

peculiar Posture prescribed for it, *Exod. xii. 11.* And though some think (but without Warrant from Scripture) that the *Jews* did not observe this; yet it is owned, they observed another, which differed from the Common Posture of Eating, and was reckon'd Religious. However, 'tis spoken, that our *Saviour* performed this Eating with several Religious Ceremonies that were not in the first Institution: Such is that we find, *Luke xxii. 17. And he took the Cup, and gave Thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among your selves.* This *Cup* is different from the Sacramental *Cup*, which is instituted, *ver. 20.* And therefore if we would imitate Christ, we ought to eat the *Lord's Supper* in a Way peculiar to it self, and different from our Common Meals.

4. But, Fourthly, The full Answer to the Argument, is, That it goes on a false Supposition, That our *Saviour* instituted this Sacrament in the common Posture of Eating. Which no-wise appears in Scripture; neither can it be inferred from a y thing said or intimated by the Evangelists, or *St. Paul*, but rather the contrary. It's true, whilst the Disciples were Eating, *he took Bread*; but after that, *he gave Thanks, and blessed it*; and then *he brake it, and gave it to them*: And it is not to be supposed that the Disciples continued Eating whilst our *Saviour* was giving Thanks, and Blessing; that is, Praying. Our *Saviour* therefore, or his Disciples, were not Eating, but giving Thanks, and Praying, whilst this Sacrament was instituted; and therefore it was proper to be done (and, in probability, was done by our *Saviour*) in a Thanksgiving and Praying Posture. Neither was there any Necessity to take notice of this Change of Posture; since the Change of the Action, from *Eating*, to *Thanksgiving* and *Blessing*, sufficiently signifies and infers it. There is no notice taken of our *Saviour's* Rising at all from the Table, by any of the three *Evangelists* that

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that deliver to us the *Institution* of the Sacraments; and yet it is plain, from *John* xiii. 4. that he did Rise from that Supper, and *washed his Disciples Feet*, and *sate down* again, *ver.* 12. and so he might Rise to Bless and Distribute the Holy Sacrament: And therefore we have no Assurance from Scripture, that our Saviour instituted this Sacrament in a Common Table-Posture, rather the contrary seems probable. So that he has left us at Liberty to follow the general Rules of Decency and Reason, and what the *Scriptures* represent to us as fit, and practised in the like Cases.

Lastly, We find the *Apostle* severely reproving the *Corinthians*, for their Irreverence in *Receiving this Sacrament*; and threatening them with *Damnation*, for not *discerning the Lord's Body*; that is, for Receiving it as their *Common Food*, without distinguishing between them by a Reverend and Religious Receiving it. And sure it is but a due *Distinction* between *It* and our *Common Food*, to approach the *Lord's-Table* with as much Reverence as the Jews did their *Altar*, at which they never sate down.

Upon the whole, I think we do nothing in this, or any other Sacred Action, as to *Bodily Worship*, but what is Warranted and Grounded on the *Holy Scriptures*; and particularly, as to what we do at the *Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, it is as unjust to suspect or accuse us of Worshipping the *Lord's-Table*, or the Elements of *Bread* and *Wine*, because we Receive them *kneeling*, as it were to accuse the Jews of Worshipping their *Altar* or *Sacrifice*, because they Worshipped *before* them, as God Commanded them to do, *2 Kings* xviii. 22. I beseech God to give us true *Submission* and *Humility of Heart*; for the Outward Expressions of these Inward Dispositions of *Mind* which our Church has appointed by *Bodily Worship*, are certainly such as God has approved, and holy Men have practised in Scripture.

S E C T. III.

The Practice of the Dissenters in Bodily Worship.

I. **A**ND now I come to you, my *Friends*, who *Dissent* from us, to consider how you perform *This part of God's Worship*, and to compare your *Principles and Practices* with what I have represented from the *Holy Scriptures*.

And, First, As to *Your Principles*. I need not tell you, That you do not allow *Bodily Adoration* to be any part of *God's Worship*: Which you cannot but discern to be plainly contrary to the *Holy Scriptures*, that make it the *most proper peculiar Act* thereof, (as I have shewed before, *Chap. IV. Sect. 1. N. 1, 2, 3.*) In your *Confession of Faith*, *Chap. XXI.* Prayer, Reading *Scriptures*, &c. Singing *Psalms*, Administration of the *Sacraments*, are reckon'd up as parts of Religious *Worship*, but not a Word concerning the *Worship of the Body*. Your *Directory* doth not only leave it out, but excludes it, by requiring All to enter the *Assembly*, and to take their *Seats and Places*, without *Adoration or Bowing themselves towards one Place or other*; that is, without *Bowing themselves at all*. A Rule directly opposite to *Natural Reason*, as well as to the *Commands of God*, and to the *Examples of his Saints*: And 'tis inconceivable how it should be laid down by a *Society of Men* that professed to believe *Christ peculiarly present in their Assemblies*; which yet the *Authors of your Directory* profess to do, in that very Place where they forbid all *Adoration*. Let us then, I pray you, compare their Rule with *God's Word*: You have the *Bible* in your *Hands*, and you look upon it to be your *Priviledge* to use it: The *Scriptures* say, *O come, let us Worship, let us bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* Your *Directory* says, *Let us enter the Assembly without Adoration*

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Adoration or Bowing. Where, notwithstanding it allows, that we in a *special manner appear in God's Presence.* Surely you cannot but see, this is not only to lay aside, but to contradict the Rules of *Scripture.*

II. Your *Practice* is conformable to your *Principles.* For,

1. At your Thanksgivings or Praises, you neither Bow, nor Stand up.

2. Whereas We, and the Churches of God in all Ages, have used to Stand up at the Solemn Confessions of Faith, you have cast out of your Religious Assemblies, not only *this Act of Worship*, but the *Confessions of Faith themselves*; so material a Part of the Service of God, as appears from *Rom. x. 9, 10.* *If thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved: For with the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.* To profess solemnly that we expect no Happiness but from the good Pleasure of God, and that we freely acquiesce in his Provisions for us, is no small Evidence of the Submission of our Minds to God; and, upon that Account, may be reckoned an Instance of external Worship, and accordingly many of the *Psalms* contain such Confessions.

3. You Sit generally at your publick Prayers.

4. At the Holy Sacrament you Sit, not only whilst you Receive, but likewise at the Thanksgiving, and Blessing before: And your *Directory* imposes this Posture on Communicants, though contrary to *Holy Scripture*, in respect of that Part that concerns the Prayer and Thanksgiving; and without any *Command*, or so much as *Example* from Scripture, in respect of the Sitting at the time of Receiving.

5. Too many of your Persuasion condemn us, who conform to God's Word, in these Particulars,

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as guilty of *Superstition*; and endeavour to render our Conformity ridiculous; not being content to lay aside the *Commands of God* themselves, but endeavouring likewise to condemn and scoff at the Observation of them in *Us*.

In short, I entreat you to consider, That you have not any one *Visible Act of Adoration amongst you in your Assemblies*, except we reckon in this Number, That your Men uncover their Heads at Prayer; and yet even this is not required by your *Directory*.

III. And now let me a while examine calmly with you, the Pretences I have met with, for laying aside this Part of *God's Worship*; for it is not probable that any would banish *Adoration* out of their Assemblies, and alledge no Reason for their doing so.

I. First therefore, I find that Place of Scripture produced to this purpose, *Joh. iv. 24. God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* Some think that all *Bodily Worship* is here forbidden, and that only the *Worship of the Spirit of Mind* is required of us under the Gospel: Upon this, some have declared against all Churches, or separate Places for Worship; Others, against all *Bodily Worship*; Others, against all *Sacraments*; Others, against all *Vocal Prayers, Praises, and Thanksgivings*: And even in the Apostles time, some were against all *Visible Assemblies*. And indeed, if we understand this Place as some do, That all *Bodily Worship* is excluded by it, and that it is sufficient to worship God in our *Spirits or Minds* only, I do not see but all these are in the right; and those who pretend to be above Ordinances, and worship God no where, are most conformable to this Rule; and, next to them, the silent Meetings of the Quakers, without *Sacraments* without *Vocal Prayers or Praises*, are the most *Spiritual Service*. For if other Dissenters think *Bodily Worship*, such as *Bowing, Kneeling, &c.* unlawful or unnecessary

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cessary, because they are Acts of the Body, and unfit, on that account, to be offered to God, who is a Spirit; why may not the *Quakers* omit the *Sacraments*, and the *Words of the Mouth*, which are *Outward Things* as well as the other? Nay, why should not *Outward Teaching* or *Preaching* cease? Since the *Spirit* is a sufficient Teacher, and has promised us, *Heb. viii. 10. I will put my Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts*—*Ver. 11. And they shall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, &c.* The Principle and Reasoning is the same in all these, and will justify the *silent Meetings* of the *Quakers*; nay, the Extravagance of those that pretend to be *above all Ordinances*, as well as the Irreverence of *other Dissenters*.

But we ought to interpret Scripture so as one place may not contradict another; and since the *Holy Scriptures* shew us, that God requires our *Vocal Prayers* and *Praises*, our *Visible Sacraments* and *Adoration*, we ought not to interpret *worshipping in the Spirit* so as to exclude these, but rather conclude that they may be offered up to God in such a manner as to become proper for *Spiritual Worship*, or God would never have required them.

When therefore our Saviour represents the *Worship* He taught the *World*, as a *Worship in Spirit and Truth*; his meaning, doubtless, is not to exempt us from *worshipping his Father* with our *Bodies*, whereof He himself has given us an Example; but, to teach us, That the *outward Acts of Worship* that we pay to God, are only acceptable to Him, when they proceed from, and are accompanied with a hearty *submission of our Souls*; and that every Act is more or less acceptable, as it has more or less of our *Hearts* and *Affections* in it: But that *Circumstances of Place*, and the like, give us no Advantage, and are of no value towards making our *Worship* acceptable.

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This meaning of the Words directly answers our *Saviour's* Design, which was to shew the *Samaritan* Woman that the time was coming, that the *Worship* offer'd to *God* under the *Gospel* would be nothing more acceptable, for being offer'd at *Jerusalem*, or *Mount Gerizim*, or any other Place: But the *Heart* being right, all Places were alike. Which was directly contrary to the *Jewish Law*, that allowed no *Sacrifice* or *Oblation* to be acceptable to *God*, that was not offer'd at the *Temple*; and consequently their *Worship* derived its Acceptance from the Place, and not from the *Heart* alone of him that offer'd it.

We affirm therefore, as our *Saviour* has here taught us, That it is only from the *Heart*, or *Spirit*, that our *Worship* becomes acceptable to *God*, and that the *Time* or *Place* where it is offer'd contributes nothing to our Acceptance: But that in whatever Place, at whatever *Time*, in whatsoever *Posture* we offer up our *Spirits* and *Hearts* to *God*, we are accepted by Him.

But then we say likewise, a Man who neglects the Assemblies of Christians, cannot have a good *Heart* towards *God*, because he breaks his Command; That such as do not take care to provide a convenient and decent Place, and set it a-part for Christians to meet, and to perform *God's Worship* in, cannot have a Value for it; That such as neglect the *Holy Sacraments*, want *Faith* in his Promises, as well as *Obedience* to his Commands; and that those who neglect to worship him with their *Body*, and to pay outward Reverence and Adoration when they come into his Presence, must want inward Submission of their Minds, because they do not approach as he requires. If a Man truly worship *God* in his *Spirit*, it will oblige him, if able, to perform these outward Acts; and if he be not able, *God* doth not require them.

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It is in this, as in Faith, *Jam. ii. 18.* *A Man may say, Thou hast Faith, and I have Works : Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will shew thee my Faith by my Works.* After the same manner a Man may say, *Thou worshippest God inwardly in Heart and Spirit, and I Worship him outwardly, and in the Face of the Church with my Body : Shew me thy inward Worship without bowing, kneeling, or other Bodily Act of Worship ; and I will shew thee my inward Worship, and dread of God's Majesty, by the Worship of my Body.*

From all which it is manifest, That our Obligation to worship God in Spirit and Truth, doth no more exclude Bodily Worship, than Faith doth exclude Works.

2. The Second Pretence I have heard for banishing of Bodily Adoration, is much like the first : It is alledged, *That God has no value for it ; and that if our Hearts are humble and right with God, no matter whether we signifie it by outward Acts of Adoration, or no.*

But to this I Answer,

1. That God himself is the best Judge of what befits his Majesty ; and 'tis a sure sign that He valueth a Thing when he requires it : Since therefore He has commanded us to render Him this Bodily Worship ; for us to alledge, *That He doth not value it,* is too like setting up our own Wisdom above His.

2. The Words of our Prayers, or Praises, and all the Fruits of our Lips, are outward Things, as well as the Gestures of our Bodies ; and God values them as little as our prostrating our Bodies before Him, when the Heart goes not along with them, as appears from *Isa. i.* where he shews his Abhorrence, not only of Sacrifices, Feasts, and spreading forth Hands, but likewise of Prayers, *ver. 4.* And *Mark vii. 6, 7.* *This People honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart*

is far from me : *Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, &c.* Yet to throw *Vocal Prayers* and *Praises* out of the Service of God, were absolutely to destroy His *Visible Worship* ; and after the same manner to throw out all outward Signs of Reverence, such as *kneeling, &c.* is a fair Step to it. For the same God that has sworn, *That every Tongue shall confess unto him* ; has likewise sworn, *That every Knee shall bow unto him*, *Rom. xiv. 11.* Both therefore are alike required in the *Worship* of God, and both alike insignificant when separated from the sincere Concurrency of our *Hearts*. When the *Meditations* of our *Hearts* go along with the Words of our Mouths, they are acceptable to God ; and when the Submission of our Souls go along with the *Worship* of our *Bodies*, it is grateful to Him, and valuable in his Sight, as all other Acts of *Obedience* are.

3. Though *Bodily Worship* in it self were a small Thing, yet the Omission of it may be a great and crying Sin, and a great Contempt of *Almighty God*. Thus eating the *forbidden Fruit* was in it self a very inconsiderable outward Action ; and yet being *forbidden*, it was the Ruin of all *Mankind*. Thus the washing a Man with Water, *In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, is in it self no great Matter ; yet the wilful Omission of it is acknowledg'd by most to be damnable. Thus *kneeling*, or *standing* at our *Prayers*, is but a Circumstance ; yet since God has required it, and *Holy Men* recommended it by their Example, to omit it wilfully may be a great Sin, and render our best-meant *Prayers* ineffectual. Much more must it be sinful to condemn, or mock at those who practise it according to God's Institution.

4. As small a Value as you think God has for outward Performances ; yet it is plain, that you lay great Weight upon the doing, or not doing of them. In Cases of Necessity, we think they may be

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be lawfully omitted ; but you are taught, That in no Cases they may be lawfully practised. You are taught rather to stay at Home, and not to *Worship God* at all *Publickly*, than to conform in outward Gestures, or Circumstances. You are advised rather to abstain all your Lives from the *Lord's Supper*, than receive it *Kneeling*. Now if you think God does hate them so much, upon supposition, that He has not required them, and accounts them a polluting of his Ordinance ; How must it displease Him to omit them, if it appears that He has commanded them ? As I think I have made sufficiently plain.

5. I intreat you, my Friends, to consider, That whatever *Bodily Worship* be in it self, yet to throw it out of our *Publick Assemblies* is of fatal Consequence, since it doth in a great measure defeat the Design of them. The great Design of *Publick Worship*, is, First, To signify, and testifie to the *World*, the Sense and Belief we have of the *Being, Power* and *Providence* of *God* ; to declare his Name to our Brethren, and in the midst of the Church to sing Praises unto him, *Heb. ii. 12.* And, Secondly, To be a Means to beget, stir up, and preserve this Sense and Belief in one another, *Heb. x. 25.* To both these Ends, *Bodily* and *External Worship* do very much contribute ; and 'tis hardly possible to attain either of them without it. For we cannot see into one another's *Hearts*, and therefore we must signify our Sense and Belief of God in the *publick Assemblies*, either by *Words* or *Actions*, and, if possible, by such as are peculiarly appointed by God to this Purpose. But in your *Meetings* there is no Obligation on any one to signify his Concurrence with the Congregation in any ordinary Act of *Worship*, either by Word or Gesture, and therefore this End of *Publick Assemblies* is utterly defeated by you. Your *Directory* does not require, or allow the People so much as to signify their Assent,

sent, by adding an *Amen* to the *Prayers* or *Thanksgivings* there offered : But, on the contrary, you ridicule those that practise it pursuant to the Directions and Examples in Scripture. And as to Gestures, such as *Kneeling*, *Standing*, or *Bowing the Body*, &c. you condemn them all as *Reliques of Idolatry*, or *Superstition*. There remains therefore in your Assemblies nothing whereby the People may testify their Belief, or assent to what they hear, which was one design of the *Meeting*. Thus by turning all *Bodily Worship* out of your *Assemblies*, you have made void this great End of them, and left no visible distinction whereby any one may signify whether he assents to the *Worship* that is offered, or dissents from it. The whole *Assembly* being to one another meer *Spectators* and *Hearers*, not *Joint-Worshippers*.

As to the other End of *Publick Worship*, which is to keep alive, and stir up your Affections ; you cannot but own that the Omission of this Outward *Worship* is a great hindrance to it : For it must needs be a great check to *Devotion*, to see a Man come into the Presence of God in a *Christian Assembly*, with less Reverence, or shew of Respect, than into the presence of an ordinary Superior ; and behave himself less civilly there, than he would do in a *Court of Justice*. And let People pretend what they will, that can never be suitable *Worship* to God, which would be rudeness to a Judge. And therefore the *Quakers* act much more reasonably, who refuse to take off their *Hats*, or pay *Bodily Worship* to Men, than other *Dissenters*, who pay it to Men, and refuse it to God : For to do so, must naturally tend to distinguish the Awe and Sense we ought to have of his Majesty, and the Belief of his peculiar Presence in our *Assemblies* ; and it is much to be feared, that this proceeds too often from the want of such Awe.

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6. To conclude, There is a Language of Gestures rather more significant and moving than that of the Tongue; and he must have a peculiar make of Mind, that is not more awakened and affected by seeing a *whole Congregation on their Knees*, with their *Hands and Eyes* lift up to *Heaven*; than to see them Sitting or Leaning, whilst their Petitions are offering up to *God*. Words therefore and Gestures being only different parts of the Language whereby we express and communicate our *Thoughts and Affections* to one another, and both being recommended to us by *Nature*, and commanded by *Scripture* to be used in the *Worship of God*, he who lays aside *Gestures*, does sin against the *Commandments of God*, as well as he that lays aside *Words*. I heartily wish you, and all *Dissenters*, would consider this: Which if you did, I assure my self you would perceive this to be a *Matter of some Moment*; and neither condemn our *Bodily Adoration*, nor continue your own (what I must call) *Irreverence*.

3. But Thirdly, Some alledge, for their omitting this part of *God's Worship*, *That they do not condemn Bodily Adoration in his Service*; but that to *Stand up and Kneel in the Congregation*, is so troublesome to them, that they judge they are better omitted.

To which I Answer, That I verily believe that these Persons do give the true Reason of this Practice. For, as it has been shewn before, 'twas of old the Reason of People's neglecting *God's Service*, and Matter of their Complaint against it, *That it was a Weariness*, Mal. i. 13. But sure, 'tis no less a Sin, to lay aside the *Commandments of God* for our *Ease*, than to change them for the *Traditions of Men*. 'Tis an Effect of our Natural Corruption, to desire to serve God with that which *costs us nothing*, and without trouble; and most are willing to save their *Pains*, as well as their *Money*, in His Service. But this is a certain sign that they have little Heart and Affection

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Affection to it : If they had, it would not seem a trouble to them to shew it, by all the *outward Demonstrations* that the Scriptures recommend to us. A *devout Heart* bows the *Body*, bends the *Knees*, and lifts up the *Hands* in *Prayer*, without any trouble : And they have reason to suspect their *own Hearts*, that find these *Demonstrations* of *Reverence* to their *Creator* and *Redeemer* uneasy to them.

This very Pretence ought to they you, That it is the *Negligence* and *Dead-heartedness* of *People* towards *God's Service*, that has banish'd these *Bodily Adorations* out of it. We think it no *Disadvantage* to our Church, that we are forc'd to acknowledge, That *your Way of Worship* is *much easier than ours*, to such as are present at it ; it being much less trouble to a Man that has no *Value* for *Religion*, to come into an Assembly, and there sit down and lap his *Cloak* about him, without being obliged to any *Word* or *Gesture* that may disturb his *Sleep*, or *Worldly Thoughts*, than to be under an *Obligation* every *Moment* to signify his *Attention* by some *Word* or *Gesture*, under the *Penalty* of being remarked by the *whole Congregation* for his *Negligence* and *Irreverence* ; which is the Case in our Assemblies ; and, 'tis to be fear'd, is the *Reason* that some leave us, and go where they may be at *Ease* and *Negligent* more securely.

4. I confess, in the Fourth Place, There are some that excuse themselves more handsomely, for not *Kneeling* at their *Prayers*, &c. Say they, *We want Conveniency, we have no room to Kneel.*

To these we Answer, That where such a Thing is omitted out of *Necessity*, not *Negligence* or *Contempt*, we believe God will not impute it to them, neither do we accuse them for it.

But then we cannot but observe, That this is not the general Reason of omitting this Part of *God's Worship* among you. For,

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1. First, It is not your Custom to Kneel in your publick Worship, though you have Conveniency, is manifest from the Practice in all your Meetings; in which I could never learn that any one Kneeled: On the contrary, you condemn Us who do.

2. When you want Conveniency for *Kneeling*, you might *Stand* at your *Prayers*; which is a *Scripture-posture* as well as *Kneeling*. You might *bow your Bodies* when you come into *God's* Presence; you might continue *Uncovered* whilst in it: But you omit *all these*, as well as *Kneeling*; and thereby plainly shew, that your Neglect in this Point, is an effect of *Choice*, not *Necessity*.

3. If *Kneeling* at publick *Prayers* be a Duty, we are obliged to provide Conveniency for it; for it is certainly a Sin, to suffer any Part of *God's* Service to be omitted, for want of Care. It is as easie to provide Conveniency for *Kneeling*, as for *Sitting*, in publick *Assemblies*: And if we consider how careful most People are to provide Seats for their Ease, and how negligent to make any Provision for *Kneeling*; 'tis but too manifest a sign (whatever is pretended) that they are much more zealous for their Ease, than for the Service of *God*.

But what Conveniency is it that Men desire? It is easie for them to have as much Conveniency as *St. Paul* and his Congregation had, when they kneeled on the *Shore*, *Act. xx.* If they had the Devotion of *St. Paul*, they would not fail to imitate his Example; *Be ye followers* (saith he) *of me, as I am of Christ.* *St. Paul* followed the Example of *Christ* in this Particular; and surely we ought to follow his, except we think our selves grown wiser than he was, or prefer our Ease to our Duty.

But the Truth of the Matter, as it seems to me, is, That your neglecting to Kneel at the most solemn of all Christian Ordinances, the *Lord's* Supper, does harden you against Reverence in the other Parts of

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of Divine Worship. And it is no wonder it should do so; for if *Reverence* be not thought necessary in that *Duty*, it may well seem unnecessary in any other.

CHAP. V.

Of the LORD's SUPPER.

SECT. I.

What the Holy Scriptures prescribe concerning the Frequency of Celebrating it.

I. **T**HE *Fifth* man and substantial Part of the the ordinary *Worship* of God, in the *Assemblies of Christians*, is, The *Celebration of the Lord's Supper*. It is not to be expected that I should treat concerning the Preparation requisite in the *Receivers*, or any of those other Circumstances which are generally agreed on as necessary in this Matter, and concerning which so many excellent Treatises are extant. I shall confine my self to one Point, and that is the *Frequency* of it, as a *publick Act of Worship*; and examine, First, What the *Institution and Practice of the Church of God*, in Scripture, teach us, as to this Particular. Secondly, Compare our *Practice* therewith. And, Thirdly, The *Practice* of those who differ from us.

As to the *Frequency of Celebrating the Lord's Supper*, I find many People of Opinion, That the Scriptures have determined nothing in it; and that therefore it is entirely left to the Discretion of the *Ministers*, how often they will Celebrate it; and to the People, how often they will Receive it: And that on this Account, every one is left to judge for him-

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himself, when he will be a Partaker of it, as he thinks it most for his *Comfort* and *Edification*; which which makes the *Celebration* and *Receiving* it so *Arbitrary* a thing, that many never *Receive* it at all: And the *Universal Neglect* of it is become one of the *Crying Sins of these Kingdoms*, and a great *Objection* against the *Reformation*.

But if we consider the *Institution* of this *Sacrament*, it will help us to give a right *Judgment*, as to the *Obligation* of the *Frequency* that lies on us. I shall endeavour to make this plain in the following *Particulars*.

I. Our *Saviour*, when he had *blest*, *broken*, and *delivered* the Bread to his *Disciples*, commanded them to *Take*, *Eat*, and *Do this*, that they saw him do, in *Remembrance of Him*: And when he had *blest* the Cup, and *given it to them*, he *Commanded* them to *Drink all of it*; and *as often as they Drink it*, to *do it in Remembrance of him*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. Now I conceive, the most natural *Interpretation* of these Words of our *Saviour*, *Do this in Remembrance of Me*, and *this do Ye as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of Me*, to be, as if he had said, "We have now Celebrated together the *Jewish Passover*, in Remembrance of our Fore-fathers *Deliverance* out of *Egypt*: But I am about to purchase for you, by my *Death*, a much more glorious *Deliverance* from the *Slavery of Sin*, and the *Power of Hell*. And I order you for the future to do this (which you see done by Me) in *Remembrance of Me*, as what you have hitherto done, has been in Remembrance of your *Deliverance* out of *Egypt*. From this *Institution* it appears,

1. That the *Lord's Supper* is substituted in the place of the *Passover*, which was commanded by the *Law* to be celebrated once in the Year; and that in a Place appointed by God, where all *Israel* were to assemble for it.

2. That

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2. That Our *Saviour* has confined us to no Place, or prefix'd Time for the *Celebration of his Supper* that succeeds it; which makes it much more easie for us to observe it, and renders us much more inexcusable if we neglect it.

3. Since Our *Saviour* has taken off the Confinement to Time and Place, that made the *Passover* such a Burthen; it follows, that they who celebrate it seldomer than the *Jews* did their *Passover*, must needs have less regard to the Memory of Christ's Death, and the Deliverance wrought by it, than the *Jews* had to their Deliverance out of *Egypt*: There being no other imaginable Reason that can tempt them to neglect purifying themselves for this Solemnity of *Worship*, and frequenting it, but the deadness of their *Hearts* towards Christ, and the want of *Sense, Gratitude* and *Love* towards their Master.

4. Christ's positive Command, to *Do this in Remembrance of Him*, &c. must oblige us in *some Times*, and in *some Circumstances*: And there can be no better way of determining *when* we are obliged to do it, than by observing when *God* in his goodness gives us Opportunity; for either we are then obliged to do it, or else we may chuse whether we will ever do it or no; there being no better Means of determining the Frequency, than this of *God's* giving us the Opportunity. And the same Rule holding in all other general positive Commands, such as in those that oblige us to *Charity*, we may be sure it holds likewise in this. Therefore, whoever slights, or neglects any Opportunity of *Receiving*, which *God* affords him, does sin as certainly as he who being enabled by *God* to perform an Act of *Charity*, and invited by a fit Object, neglects to Relieve him, or shuts up his Bowels of Compassion against him, concerning whom the Scripture assures us, That *the Love of God dwells not in him*: And the Argument is rather

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rather stronger against him who neglects this Holy Sacrament. For how can it be supposed that Man has a true Love for his *Saviour*, or a due Sense of his *Sufferings*, who refuses or neglects to remember the greatest of all Benefits, in the easiest manner, though Commanded to do it by his *Redeemer*, and invited by a fair Opportunity of *God's* own offering?

5. It is manifest, That if it be not *our own Faults*, we may have an Opportunity every *Lord's Day* when we meet together; And therefore that Church is guilty of laying aside this Command, whose Order of *Worship* doth not require and provide for this Practice. Christ's Command seems to lead us directly to it: For, *Do this in Remembrance of Me*, implies, that Christ was to leave them; that they were to meet together after he was gone; and that he required them to remember him at their Meetings whilst he was absent. The very Design of our public Meetings on the *Lord's Day*, and not on the *Jewish Sabbath*, is to remember and keep up in our Minds a Sense of what Christ did and suffered for us, *till He come again*; and this we are obliged to do, not in such a manner as *our own Invention* suggests, but by such means as *Christ himself has prescribed to us*, that is, by Celebrating this *Holy Sacrament*.

It seems then probable from the very Institution of this Sacrament, that Our *Saviour* designed it should be a Part of *God's Service* in all the *Solemn Assemblies* of *Christians*, as the *Passover* was in the yearly Assemblies of the *Jews*. To know therefore *how often* Christ requires us to Celebrate this *Feast*, we have no more to do, but to enquire *how often* Christ requires us to *Meet together*; that is, at least every *Lord's Day*.

II. And the same is farther manifest, in the Second Place, from the *Examples* of the *Apostles*, and

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of the Churches of God in the New Testament. They cannot be supposed but to have understood what Christ meant by these Words, *Do this in Remembrance of Me*; and if it appears that they did make this Feast a constant part of their Ordinary Worship, we may safely conclude, That Christ meant it should be so. And here 'tis observable, That we do not find any solemn stated Meeting of Christians for Worship in the whole New Testament without it.

At first the Disciples had their Meetings every Day, and then they likewise daily received this Sacrament, *Act. ii. 46. And they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and in breaking Bread from House to House.* And St. Paul supposes that their Meetings together was on purpose, and with express Design to Celebrate this Feast, *1 Cor. x. 20. When ye come together therefore in one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper*; which intimates, That one main Design of their coming together, was, and ought to have been, *to eat the Lord's Supper*; though by their Misbehaviour they so corrupted their Ordinance, that it could not be called *His Supper*.

If one should now reprove Christians whom they observe to misbehave themselves in Church, in these words; *When you come together into one place, That is not to hear the Word of God preached to you; for one is Talking, and another is Sleeping*: Wou'd not every Body conclude, That in the Opinion of the Reprover, the Hearing of the Word of God Preached, ought to be one End of their coming together? And then surely the Apostle's saying, That *when you come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper, &c.* gives us ground to conclude, That in his Opinion, *Eating the Lord's Supper* ought to be one constant end of our coming together. Which is further manifest from the Advice he gives them, *ver. 33. Wherefore, my Brethren, when ye come together to Eat, tarry one for another.* One end there-

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fore of their coming together, was, as Children come together in a Family at Meal-time, that is to be fed at their Father's Table : For what the Apostle called in the former Verse, coming together *into one place* ; in this Verse he calls, coming together *to eat* : Intimating, that a main end of their coming together *into one place*, was *to eat*.

3. When the Meeting of Christians came to be fixed to the *First Day of the Week*, or the *Lord's Day*, the *Breaking of Bread* was likewise brought to the same Day : So *Acts xx. 7.* *And upon the First Day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, Paul preached unto them.* From which words we may conclude two Things : *First*, That the *First Day* of the Week was the Disciples time of publick Worship : *Secondly*, That the breaking of Bread, or celebrating the Holy *Eucharist*, was a part of that Worship. The Scriptures is as plain for the one as the other.

There have been some Disputes raised about changing the Day of Worship, from the Last to the First Day of the Week, and this place is usually produced to justify the Change ; and sure the same place is as clear for the Celebration of the *Lord's Supper* on that Day, as for the *Observation* of the Day it self, instead of the *Sabbath*. And therefore whoever wilfully passes the *Lord's Day* without it, doth not observe it as the Scriptures, from the Practice of the Disciples, direct us to do.

4. I have endeavoured all along to confine my self to the plain words of *Scripture*, and to use such Arguments only, as the meanest Persons might be able to judge of from their *Bibles* : Yet in a controverted place of *Scripture* concerning the meaning of a Command of Christ, relating to some positive Duty, I take the constant Practice of the Church from the Apostles downward, to be a good means of determining the Sense of it : And as there is

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not any Example of a stated Assembly for Worship in the *New Testament* without the *Lord's Supper*, so I think there is not any Example of that Nature in all *Antiquity*. For the truth of which, I appeal to those that are skill'd in it.

The nearer we come to the Apostles, we shall still find the *Lord's Supper* the more punctually observed, as a constant part of the Ordinary Service of the Church: And 'tis remarkable, that when first some who had been present at the Prayers and Preaching of the Church began to go away from the *public Assemblies* without *Receiving* (which was a Corruption that came in about Two Hundred Years after Christ) it was looked on as so great an Innovation and Breach of the *Scripture Rule*, that the Church Decreed, Whosoever was guilty of it, should be Excommunicated. So, particularly the Ninth of those commonly called the *Canons of the Apostles*, and the Second Canon of the Council of *Antioch*.

Thus the Practice of the Church continued for many Ages. And though the generality of Men could not be persuaded constantly to partake of the *Lord's Supper*, after the Discipline of the Church was dissolved, and the Piety of Men began to cool, yet still it was Celebrated on the *Lord's Day*, according to the first settled *Practice of the Church*.

5. And indeed, the corrupt Practice of the solitary Masses of the *Papists*, is a further Evidence of its being counted Originally a part of the Ordinary Worship of God. I think it is confessed by all, even by the *Papists* themselves, that those Masses had their Original from the Universal Corruption and Negligence of Christians; for whilst the People had either Piety or Zeal, they Communicated with the Bishop or Ministers, in every *Assembly*, at least a competent Number of them: But when Piety and Devotion were in a manner lost in the cor-

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rupt Ages of the Church, it came to pass, that though the Minister Consecrated the Elements every *Lord's Day*, according to the Example of the Holy Scriptures, and Antiquity, yet he could prevail with few or none to Receive with him, but was often forced to Receive alone.

This was a great Corruption, and a falling from the *Scripture-precedent*; but the *Roman Church*, instead of Reforming the Abuse, by obliging the People to Receive as formerly, corrupted her Principles, as well as Practice, and Decreed it lawful and sufficient for the *Priest* to Receive alone. Yet this Abuse shews us what should be, and what has been the *Practice*; and that the *Church* has constantly reckon'd the *Lord's Supper*, as an ordinary Part of *publick Worship* in *Christian Assemblies* on Solemn Days; and sure then, to lay it aside, can be termed no less than an *Invention* of his own; since we can neither in *Scripture*, or in the Church of God for Fourteen Hundred Years together, (which is a sufficient Commentary on the *Scripture Text*) produce one Example of a stated Solemn Christian Assembly without it.

S E C T. II.

The Practice of Our Church, as to Frequent Communions.

I. **H**AVING thus consider'd the Rules and Examples that the *Scriptures* afford us in this Point; let us, in the Second Place, compare the Rules and Practice of *Our Church* with this Pattern. I will not pretend that they come fully up to it, this being the most defective part of the *Reformation*; but I doubt not, on view, it will appear, that *Our Church* comes nearer the *Scripture-precedent*, than perhaps any other.

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'Twas the Design of the *Reformation*, to throw out the Corruptions of the *Church of Rome*, and to bring Things back to what was practised in the *Apostles* time, and in the purer Ages of the *Church*. And as to the present Point before us, Our *Reformers* found two Corruptions crept in by Time: The first was, That the *Priest* Received the *Lord's Supper* alone, without the People, which destroyed the Nature of this *Holy Sacrament*, as a Communion: The Second was, That the People thought they had sufficiently observed the *Lord's Day*, if they saw *Mass*, without understanding it, or Receiving. Our *Church* therefore, to *Reform* the first of these, Ordains, That there shall be no Communion except Four (or Three at the least) Communicate with the Priest. So where Three are willing to Receive, the Ministers may proceed to the *Holy Communion* every *Lord's Day*. For our Saviour has promised, That *where two or three are met together, He will be in the midst of them*.

Three therefore make a Congregation, and have a Title to the Ordinances of *Christ*; and there is no reason that the Obstinacy or Negligence of others, should hinder such as are willing from Worshipping *God*, according to his Institution; and therefore our *Church* has taken care to provide for them, by Ordering that some part of the Communion-Service be read every *Lord's Day*; both with design to put all the People in mind of their Duty, and to accommodate such as can be prevail'd on herein to live up to the Rules of Scripture, and the Practice of the Primitive Church.

2. 'Tis Order'd, That in Cathedral and Collegiate Churches and Colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall all receive the Communion every Sunday at the least,

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3. That every *Parishioner* shall Communicate at least Three times in the Year, whereof *Easter* to be one; and surely such as cannot fit themselves so often, must, in their own Opinion, be out of the State of Grace, and deserve to be Excommunicated by the Church.

4. Lastly, As to our Practice, we have prevailed so far, that Universally the *Lord's Supper* is Celebrated *Thrice* every Year; and where either our Persuasions, Arguments, or Entreaties can prevail with our People, we have Monthly Communion; and in Cities and large Towns, by the changing the *Monthly Days* in several Churches, People that are devoutly disposed, have Opportunities of Receiving Weekly: And we have reason to bless God that our Church wants not some, and I hope I may say many such.

5. Upon the whole, it must be confessed, That to hold Solemn Assemblies of Christians without Communicating, is a Corruption of *Popery*, and came in by dissolution of Manners, and slackning of the Discipline of the Church; and though we have not been able to *Root-out* and *Reform* this *Popish Practice* entirely, yet we have done our *Endeavour*; and, by God's Blessing, may say, we have made some Progress in it; insomuch, that if we take that for *Ordinary* which has a constant fixed Time for its Observation, the *Holy Sacrament* is an *Ordinary* part of our Publick Service of God.

And I verily persuade my self, That by God's Assistance we should have brought our People before now to the Scripture Order of constant Weekly Communicating, had not the ill Example and Obstinacy of those that separate from Our Church encouraged them in their Negligence, and weaken'd our Discipline: For our Church orders *Non-Communicants* to be Presented and Punish'd: And our Ministers do not generally flatter the People in their

Sin, or dissemble their Duty in this Point ; but frequently and earnestly, by *Sermons, Admonitions, and Treatises* purposely published to this intent, press them to it ; and therefore we are blameless before God and Man. Nor is it our Fault that the Practice of our People is not Reformed, according to the Pattern of the *Apostolick Church*, and the Rules of *our own* : So that we cannot be accused of laying aside the *Commandments of God*, or of teaching any Doctrine of *our own Invention* in this particular ; though we are yet too far short of the *Primitive Practice and Institution*.

S E C T. III.

The Practice of the Dissenters, about Frequency of Communicating.

I Come now (according to my former Method) to *You*, my Friends, who *Dissent from us*, and entreat *You* to Examine, with *Me*, your Principles and Practice, by these Scripture-Rules and Examples : And here, First, I must observe to you, That you have no Fix'd or Set-times for the Administration of this Sacrament ; on the contrary, your *Directory orders*, *That the Times how often this is to be Celebrated may be considered and determined by the Ministers and other Church-Governours of each Congregation, as they shall find most convenient for the Comfort and Edification of the People committed to their Charge ;* By which Rule, the *Lord's Supper* is Excluded from being any ordinary constant part of *God's Service*, it being referred to the Discretion of the *Ministers and Elders* of each Congregation to determine, as in other occasional Things, how often the People shall have the Comfort of it. It had been as reasonable to refer it to their Discretion how often the People shou'd have the comfort of Hearing the Scriptures read,

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read, of joining in the Praises of God, or in Prayers to Him ; which yet they determine *they are obliged to every Lord's Day*. Had they made the same Rule for the Holy Communion, they had, indeed, conformed to the Scripture-precedent, and might have pretended to some Reformation : But to leave the Celebration of this Feast altogether Discretionary, I have shewed to be directly against what we find practised in Scripture.

II. Whereas it is a Corruption of *Popery*, to suffer the *People* to be present at the publick Assemblies for Worship and Celebration of the *Lord's Supper*, without being obliged to Receive ; *your Teachers*, instead of endeavouring to Reform this *Abuse* or *Innovation*, have fallen into another Practice as unprecedented in *Scripture*, the Excluding this Sacrament entirely from your Ordinary solemn Meetings. And truly, in this Point, you seem more inexcusable than the *Papists* themselves ; for the *Papists* order the Elements to be Consecrated every *Lord's Day*, and distributed to those that desire it : But *your Teachers* neither offer it to the *People*, nor invite them to it ; nay, so far are they from it, that they do not so much as *afford an Opportunity* to those that desire to be constant Receivers : Which is plainly to multiply the Abuses introduced by *Popery*, instead of *Reforming* them.

III. They rarely press their *People* to *Communicate* : They have few *Sermons* or *Discourses* to that Purpose ; and many of them condemn our Zeal, for endeavouring to restore the *constant Communion* precedent in *Scripture*.

I must further make you sensible, That your Practice is yet worse than your Principles. Your *Directory* owns, that the *Communion*, or *Supper of the Lord*, is frequently to be Celebrated, &c. But it fares with this, as with all other indefinite Rules ; they signify only, that *People* may do what they please in the Case.

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Case. No Body can certainly tell what *Frequently, Many, Often, or Convenient*, signifie; and therefore, where only these Words are used in a Rule, it is little better, than to have no Rule at all, as appears in this very Case: For, when *People* were relaxed from the particular and certain Rules of our Church, by the first breaking off of those of your *Persuasion* from us, the *Lord's Supper* was laid aside wholly for several Years, by some *Congregations*; and at last too many came to look on it as a Matter of no constant Necessity.

I appeal to *You*, whether it is not yet reckoned a great Thing among many of you, if once in a Year or two, a Communion be celebrated in one of your Meetings: Nay, among some of you, it is often omitted for several Years together; and in some Places for ten or more. I fear I may say, Your *People* generally have too little *Sense of the Obligation* of Receiving it at all; and your Ministers indulge them so far in this *Corruption*, that a Man may live comfortably amongst you, and with the *Reputation* of a Professor, to *Thirty or Forty Years* of Age, and never Receive at all: And by the best Enquiry I cou'd make, I cou'd not compute that *One in Ten* that go to your Meetings ever Receive, through the whole course of their Lives, notwithstanding *Christ's* positive Command to do it in Remembrance of Him. So unhappily are Men over-seen in laying aside the *Commands of God*, for their own *Inventions*.

I should be glad to find that I were mistaken in this *Computation*: In the mean time, you must give me leave to tell you plainly, That this Practice of *Rare, or No Communion*, is so peculiarly your Own, that I think you are altogether singular in it; and are so far from having any Precedent for it in Scripture, that I doubt whether any Precedent can be found for you, even amongst the most degenerated or barbarous People that ever called themselves *Christians*.

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And therefore, if you have either any true Regard for Scripture, or Reverence for the *Constant and Universal Practice of the Church of God*; you ought to reflect upon *your Practice* herein; and consider how you can answer it to God, or your *Consciences*.

I will not examine the *Reasons* commonly given for your Omissions in this weighty Affair, since it is manifest no *Reason of Man's Invention* ought to be admitted for direct *Disobedience to Christ's Command*. If you are *Christians* in earnest, you ought, as often as you have *Opportunity*, to remember the great Love of *our Lord and Master*, as He has Commanded; And your *Ministers* ought to take care to afford you frequently such *Opportunities*. If you or they neglect this, I do not see how you can with *Reason* insist so much on the *Purity and Observation of Christ's Institution*.

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CONCLUSION.

I Have gone through the *Five Principal Parts* of the *publick Worship of God*; and (I hope) in all of them, have made good what I first undertook; and shewed, that there needs no more to justify the *publick Service* of our Church, than to compare it with the *Rules and Examples of Scriptures*. I have only a few Words to add, by way of **CONCLUSION**, first to my Brethren of the *Clergy*, and then to the *Laitie* who are under my Charge.

To the Conforming **CLERGY of DERRY.**

1. **A**ND, First, As to you, *My Brethren*, that are of *Our Communion*, and own *My Authority*; let me, as a Brother, and a Fellow-Labourer, Exhort you to be Thankful to God, that has intrusted you with such an excellent Ministry and Service; which being built on so sure a Foundation as the *Word of God*, can never be shaken, or put you to any great Difficulty to defend it; since you need no more than the plain Words of your Bibles, without *Gloss* or *Commentators*, to assert and justify it.

2. Let me recommend to you, Reverence, Devotion, and Diligence, in the Use of this *Service*. I have already observed, That there is a Language of *Gestures*, rather more significant and affecting than that of Words. It becomes us therefore, not only to Love and Use our *Service*, but likewise to recommend it to the *People*, by a distinct and affectionate manner of Pronouncing and Reading it, and by a devout and grave Behaviour at it. This can
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never be pressed too much on you, or on others by you ; since 'tis absolutely necessary to give *Life* and *Efficacy* to it ; as the contrary will expose the *best* and *most sacred* Thing to *Contempt*, and bring a greater *Disparagement* on our *Service*, than all *Our Adversaries* Endeavours can ever do. Though *Our Service* be appointed by *God*, and *Warranted* by *Scripture* ; yet even *God's Appointments* are *Abomination* to him, when separated from the *Heart*, and are only acceptable to Him, as they contribute to *inward Devotion*. Let me therefore intreat you to labour so to perform the *Service of Our Church*, that it may attain the End for which *God* has design'd *His Worship*.

3. Since the *Service of our Church* is such as *God* has required in *His Word*, let nothing discourage us in the Use of it : Let us remember that we perform it in *Obedience to God* ; And though some Hate, some Revile, and some Despise it, yet that the *Author* of it is able to *Vindicate* it. This is no new Thing ; 'Tis the Entertainment the World hath generally given *God's Service*, and his *Truths* : And therefore neither *Obstinacy*, *Perverseness*, or *Negligence* of the People, whom you are to persuade, ought to Discourage you. Be Diligent, be Constant, be Resolute, and be assured, that *God* will always give you Success, so far as is necessary to support his *Truth*. All Means are therefore to be attempted ; and when one faileth, another is to be applied : And the more averse People seem to the Way of *Worship* prescribed by *God*, and the more eager they are for any Corruption, the more Industry is to be used to bring them off from it ; and when all other Means fail, earnest *Prayers* and *Intercessions* with *God* still remain : We are never to Despair, whilst we have *God's Truth* on our side, though whole *Provinces* should fall off from the Church ; as all they in *Asia* did from *Saint Paul*,
2 Tim.

2 *Tim.* i. 15. Though few or none *should believe our Report*, as it happened to Our Saviour Himself; yet God will have a Reward for the faithful Endeavours of his Ministers: And therefore we must not desist, though People seem Obstinate; but *in season, and out of season*, by Exhortation and Writing, by all Means of Importunity and Industry, we must press them to their Duty, and endeavour to bring them back to the Purity of *God's Worship*, as he has instituted it.

4. Let me put you in mind, That the *Motives* you had to do your Duty, are the most Noble and Generous that can be: And you have this Advantage, that you cannot be supposed to be zealous in your Office, out of any private Interest, or prospect of particular Profit. Your Maintenance and Preferments are ascertained to you by Law, and do not depend on the voluntary Contribution of the People. And as you are under no Temptation to please them, by complying with their Vices or Humours; so neither can you be suspected to be Diligent and Industrious in your Office, out of any such mean Considerations. Since therefore what Pains you take, may well be supposed to proceed only from Sense of Duty, and the Love of God, let me intreat you, to labour in it.

It is certain, That neither Popularity, Faction, nor Worldly Interest, can influence you to this, so as they may some, that have no other way to attain to Honour, or Support, but by making or gaining a Party. But God forbid, that true Piety and Zeal for Souls, shou'd work less effectually upon you, than those carnal and servile *Motives* do on others.

Let me therefore earnestly encourage and intreat you to do it more and more, and that you will endeavour to *become all things to all Men*; and decline none of those *Arts* which are allowable when applied,

plied, to gain the People to *Truth* and *Holiness* ; but very Wicked, when employed to divide and seduce them.

5. Let me put you in mind, That you are *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, and not of a *Party* : And therefore it concerns you to mind the common Interest of *Holiness*, and *Religion*, more than those Differences that are often of little Concern in themselves, and are insisted on only as the Occasions and Badges of those People, who being resolved to separate themselves, are obliged to take up little Differences for a Distinction. The less you meddle with these Disputes, it is commonly the better : And indeed it is not prudent to mention them, till Men's Minds be fitted and prepared by a true Sense of the great Duties of *Religion* : And then the best way, perhaps, will be, to shew of what little weight they are, to cause or justify Divisions or Quarrels amongst Christians.

I am well aware that it may be objected to us, That whilst we press the great *Duties* of the First and Second *Table*, and spend our Pains and Diligence in defending our *common Christianity*, against *Papists*, *Socinians*, *Deists*, and *Atheists*, those that are our *Adversaries* in these lesser Points, have made their Advantage of our being employed against the *common Enemy* , to undermine us, with the People ; nay, that some of them have been joined with those *Enemies* to pull down our *Constitution*. But yet I persuade my self, that we are in less hazard from them, whilst we do our Duty, and apply our selves to the great and common Obligations of *Our Holy Religion*, than if we should leave *this* exposed to the Assaults of *our common Enemies*, to guard our selves from the Attempts of such *Back-Friends*. We must therefore have an Eye to them ; but the other, the great and common *Truths* and *Duties* of the *Gospel*, must be our main Business.

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I might add many more *Remarks* proper to my present Subject, but I know your own *Prudence* and *Observation* are sufficient to suggest them to you; I shall only add my *Prayers* for you, that God will increase your *Wisdom* and *Zeal*, and effectually turn them to his own *Glory*.

To the Dissenting MINISTERS of
D E R B Y.

BUT as to *You*, *My Brethren*, That disown my *Communion* and *Authority*, I have reason to fear, that what I shall offer to you, may receive some *Prejudices* from my *Station* and *Character*, with which you seem offended: Yet *Reason is Reason*, from whomsoever it proceed; and I only desire that you would weigh seriously what I have here offered, in defence of the *Service of our Church*; and if the *Arguments* do not convince *You*, yet let me pray *You* to reflect thus far on the Matter; as to remember, that all Men's Minds are not of the same make; and that it becomes *You*, and all good Men, at least to treat *Our Service* with Respect; since we believe, and think we have proved, That it is clearly founded on the *Word of God*. It will not excuse scurrilous or unseemly Reflections on it, to say that we are mistaken; For all Men are fallible, and *You* may as well be mistaken as you suppose *We* are; and therefore lest *You* should be in the wrong, it will be the safest way to be modest in *Censuring*.

No Man ought to take it ill that another proposes *Reason* against his *Opinion*; but to scoff at, or revile any *Practice* or *Opinion* that another believes to be founded on the *Word of God*, is not only ill Manners, but is of dangerous Consequence; being apt

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to breed *Bitterness* and *Animosities* between the Parties : And if it should happen in a Case where the *Practice* or *Opinion* is really *Warranted* by the *Word of God*, it would be a *Blasphemy* and *Impiety*. And therefore in all Matters of *Religion* we ought to avoid this manner of Treatment; and whatever *Book* uses it, we need trouble our selves no further with it, for it is certainly written only to serve a Party, and not *Truth*.

There is another Thing that in *Justice* I think I may request of *You*, which is, That in *Your Worship* and *Practice*, *You* will not make the Difference between us seem greater than really it is. To abstain from a Thing confessed to be lawful in the *Service of God*, merely because observed by us, surely is very far from a *Spirit of Meekness* and *Moderation* : And therefore I may hope that *you* will not indulge *Your People* in such affected Distances, that can serve to no other Purpose, but to make Parties irreconcilable; and must proceed from a greater *bitterness of Spirit* than a good Man can be guilty of towards any Christian.

And that *You* may understand my Mind the better in this Matter, I will give *You* a few Instances that I hope will be inoffensive, and in which we may justly expect *Your Compliance*.

1. The first is, in the Use of the *Lord's Prayer*, which is owned in *Your* larger Catechism, to be, *Not only for Direction, as a Pattern according to which we are to make other Prayers, but may be also used as a Prayer*. And in your *Directory* 'tis recommended to be used in the *Prayers of the Church*. Yet I am informed that *You, my Brethren* of this Diocese, who separate from *Our Communion*, do universally neglect it, and thereby confirm *Your Hearers* in an Opinion too common amongst them, that all *Forms of Prayer* are Unlawful : And that, for no other Reason, that I can learn, but to keep up a Dif-

ference from us in Practice, where we really agree in Point of Doctrine.

2. Your *Sitting* at *Publick Prayers*, may be a Second Instance, in which we may reasonably expect some *Reformation*. 'Tis a very irreverent Thing in it self, against the *Command* and *Examples* of *Scriptures*, as I think I have sufficiently shewed, and against the *Opinion* of your best *Casuits*, particularly of Dr. Ames, *de Conscientia*, Lib. 4. Cap. 18. *Sessio per se non est gestus Orandi, qui nullam exprimit reverentiam neque in Scripturis approbatur*; That is, "Sitting is not of it self a Posture of Prayer, because it expresses no Reverence, neither is it approved in Scripture." Yet I understand that this is the general Posture in which your *People* offer their publick Prayers; and either because it is for their Ease, or because you are unwilling to lay any stress on Outward Performances; or, lastly, lest you should be like us, you indulge them in it; and some of them are so ignorant, that they reckon it a piece of Superstition in us to Kneel at our Prayers; and are averse to our Service, amongst other Reasons, because this is required at it. Which Notions, I suppose, you your selves do not approve; and therefore we may justly expect that you shou'd endeavour to inform your *People* better, and bring them to a Compliance with the Rules of Decency in their *Religious Performances*.

3. My Third Instance shall be in the Matter of the *Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. I suppose no serious considering Persons amongst you can deny, but the Celebrating it so seldom as it is done in your Meetings, and the *Peoples* backwardness in Receiving it, are very great Faults; and therefore we may reasonably expect that you should press home to your *People* the Danger of their Neglect, and represent to them truly the Sin of it, so as not to suffer any to assume the Name of a *Professor*, or a

Religious

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Religious Person, that doth not, in some measure, come up to the Scripture-precedent in this Particular; and withal, so order the Celebration thereof, that every one may have sufficient Opportunities to Receive, as the first Christians did; which in your present way of managing, is impossible: From whence, you may be sure, *yours* is not the *Scripture-way*, and therefore needs *Reformation*.

4. Let me put you in mind, That it is ordered by your *Directory* (as I have already observed) that *ordinarily one Chapter of each Testament be read at every Meeting, and sometimes more*. I think you cannot dispense with this Rule, without being liable to just Censure, from all that have a true Value for the *Word of God*: And yet I am informed that there is not one of your *Meetings* in this *Diocese* where it is observed; to the great Detriment of our *Common Christianity*, and Offence of your *Brethren*. I know the *People* are fonder of Sermons and Lectures of Humane Composure, than of the pure *Word of God* in its naked Simplicity: But you know this to be a carnal and sinful Humour in them; and God forbids any that claims to be a Minister of the Gospel shou'd indulge them in it: And therefore as you wou'd maintain a due Reverence in the *People* for the *Word of God*, I think we may expect your Conformity to us in this Particular.

5. I suppose you very well know that the most learned and sober *Non-conformists* do own, that *Occasional Communion* with our Church is lawful, and that *People* had better come to our *Worship*, (at least where he that *Officiates* is of *Ability* and *Sobriety*) than sit at Home on the *Lord's Day*, or frequent no *Assemblies* at all; and you cannot be ignorant that many Thousands in these Parts neglect all *publick Worship*, and many suffer their Children to die Unbaptized, for want of Ministers of their own *Communion*; and therefore in this Case, it is a Point

of Justice due to the *Souls* of these *poor People*, and to our common Christianity, to let them know that it is their *Duty* to join with us both in *Worship* and *Sacraments*, as far as *your Brethren in England* have allowed it on such *Occasions*.

6. You are sensible that amongst those Protestants that dissent from our Church, some are *Congregational*, and other *Presbyterians*; you of this *Dioceſe* where I am concerned, profess to be of this latter Sort, and agree with us in owning, that by Christ's Appointment, the particular Churches in convenient *Districts*, ought, according to Scripture-precedents, to associate under one Government; and these again to unite themselves into greater Combinations of *Provincial* and *National* Churches. The difference between *You* and *Us*, is concerning these particular *Districts*; namely, Whether the Government of them ought to be in a *Presbytery*, with a *Bishop* as President and Governour, by Christ's Appointment; or in a *College of Presbyters absolutely Equal*. So then, we both own *National* and *Provincial Churches*, as well as single *Worshipping Congregations*; but the *Congregational Dissenters* deny that Christ instituted any other Church, besides a single Congregation, and affirm, that all other Churches, such as *Classical*, *Provincial*, or *National*, are *Humane Inventions*; and that every single *Congregation* is *Independent*, and may indeed keep a fair Correspondence with its Neighbour-Congregations, but is not under any common Government with them. These last are the avowed Principles of Mr. Baxter, Dr. Owen, Mr. Lobb, Mr. Humphrys, Mr. Boyse, Mr. Alsop, Mr. Clerkson, and generally of all the late Defenders of the *Dissenters Cause* in *England* and *Ireland*, that I have met with. Now it is manifest, that these Principles of theirs, are much more different from your Principles, than ours are; and the difference is much greater, and more material.

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terial. For it is possible, on your Principles and ours, to preserve Unity, and to keep up some value for Excommunication, and other Censures of the Church; since he who is censured in one Church cannot be received into another, neither with you nor us: Whereas in the *Congregational way*, he that is Excommunicated in one *Congregation*, may remove to another, or set up one for himself, if he pleases; at the worst, if he shou'd, it wou'd be counted *but an Irregularity*. These Principles are destructive to the Peace and Unity of the Church, as well as to our *Common Cause*: And our learned Men have carefully answered all the principal Writers of that sort; so that no Books of that kind have remained unanswered, but such only as were meer Repetitions of what had been said and answered before. I do not remember any of you have of late undertaken the Defence of this important Truth; though the *Assembly of Divines*, in their *Humble Advice*——— *concerning Church-Government* (which I suppose you approve) do prove it from the Holy Scriptures, in their Title of *Classical Assemblies*. Now we think, in Justice to your own Cause, as well as to Us, you ought to warn *your People* against those *Books* that maintain Principles contrary to us both; at least not to bear them in hand, that *those Books* written against Us, make for You; for this will appear a great piece of Insincerity, as well as Ingratitude; and will tempt the *World* to believe, that you are willing to encourage Principles destructive to *your own Cause*, (as the Principles of *those Books* manifestly are in this very Point) so they do but serve a Turn, and strengthen your Party amongst the *ignorant People*.

6. Lastly, I think we may justly expect from you a ready Concurrence with us to beat down such Vices and Immoralities as are confessed on all hands to be against our common Christianity; such as

Adultery, Fornication, Blasphemy, Prophanation of the Lord's Day, &c. And since the *Bishops Courts* are legally impowered to punish these, and many are guilty of them who yet will not appear or submit to acknowledge their Sins, and upon that account are Excommunicated; the least that can be expected from you in these Cases, is, Not to encourage such Sinners in their Obstinacy, or to admit them to Communion amongst *You*, whilst they lie under such Censures; which might be a means to Reform, in some measure, these crying Vices.

These are but few of those Things that might be instanc'd; in which we may concur in our *Practice*, as well as we do in our *Opinions*; and if we did, I persuade my self, that though they did not bring us to one *Religious Communion*, yet they might much contribute to our living easie with one another, and take off that Uncharitableness which our *Religious Dissentions* are apt to cause amongst us: However, it would be a great Satisfaction, to Me, and I should reckon it some kind of Success in my Office, if I could prevail with any sort of People that profess to meet in the Name of *Christ*, to come nearer to his *Institution* in their *Worship*, though I should not be able to persuade them to the *Communion* whereof I am a Member.

To the Conforming LAITY of the Diocese
of DERRY.

AS to you, my *Friends* and *Brethren* of the *Laity*, who profess your selves *Members* of the *Establiſh'd Church*; It hath pleased God to place me amongst you, and to give me an *Inspection* over you; and 'tis chiefly on your *Account* that I have written and published this *Treatise*, that it may be a *Pledge* and *Testimony* to you, of my *Concern* for you, and make my *Care* to reach as far as may be amongst you. I hope my *Labours* this way may be useful to you, to settle the *Minds* of the *Doubtful*, and to awaken you all to *Diligence* and *Zeal* in the *Performance* of the *Service* of God.

The great *Principles* of your *Religion*, as you are *Members* of the *Establiſh'd Church*, are uncontroverted on all *Hands*; and I have here endeavoured to shew, that your *particular Way of Worship* is warranted by the *Holy Scriptures*. You have reason to bless God, that he has afforded you so many *Conveniencies* of frequenting it; in which he has been pleased to give you so manifest *Advantage* above your *Dissenting Neighbours*, that notwithstanding their *Numerousness*, you have *Five Places* for *Worship*, for one that they have. This will render you *inexcusable* if you neglect *Attendance* at them, or spend any *Lord's-Day* (as is too common in this Country) in a meer *Rest* from *Labour*, without any *Publick Worship*.

I must likewise put you in mind. That our *Service* is not only fitted for the *Publick*, but is likewise proper for private *Families*; and therefore I would advise you to make use of the *Words* with which our Church has furnished you, in your *Houses*, as well as in the Church; at least to use such select *Hymns* and

Collects as seems most adapted to that purpose. And at more Solemn Times, I conceive our *Litany* is as full and proper a Service as any Master of a Family can desire to offer to God.

I must therefore more earnestly and passionately exhort you, by the Name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, for his Church's sake, and your own, that you will add *Diligence* and *Zeal* to this your reasonable Service, and prepare your Hearts to seek the Lord your God in his *Holy Worship*: And particularly that you would endeavour to convince the World, that it is not *Faction*, or a *Party*, you contend for, but the *Fruits of Righteousness*; and thereupon strive rather to out-live those that differ from you, than to out-argue them. Let the Innocency of your Lives, and your Christian Moderation convince them of the Unreasonableness of their Separation.

I beseech the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to multiply his *Grace* and *Peace* upon You; and to influence you by his *Holy Spirit*, that you may be perfect in every good *Work*, and particularly in that of *Worshipping* him in *Purity* and *Holiness*.

To the Dissenting LAITY of the Diocese of
DERRY.

AS to you, my Friends that Dissent from our Communion, it remains only, that I beseech you, in the Spirit of Meekness, as one that is appointed by the Providence of God, and the Care of a Christian Magistracy, to watch over your Souls) That you will seriously consider and lay to Heart what I have here tender'd to you. I cannot prevail with you to come and receive Instruction from my Mouth, and therefore I have taken this way to inform you. I will only add a few Observations, which I recommend to you, and shall leave the Success entirely to God.

1. Therefore you may observe, That in this Treatise I have not led you into long Reasonings, or the Intricacies of Humane Learning; but I have referred you to your Bibles, and you need go no farther than to them to be satisfied, whether the Things I have said, be as I have represented them, or not. Those of Berea are reckoned a Noble People, (Act. xvii. 11.) because they searched the Scriptures; and I pray most heartily to God to give you a part in that Nobleness of Mind, that you may search and find the Truth.

2. I wou'd desire you to observe, That it ever has been, and in all probability ever will be, the humour of the World, to be more fond of Their Own Invention, than of what God Commands. If we look through the whole Scriptures, we shall find, that the Prophets sent by God, the Doctrines revealed by Him, and the Worship He Commanded, have had but ill Entertainment amongst the People. There never appeared half so much Zeal or Inclination in the generality of Men, for the True God and his
Worship,

Worship, as for the false *Gods*, and their *Prophets*. And there is an obvious Natural Reason for it; since what Man invents, must needs have a nearer agreement to the Carnal and Corrupt Inclinations of our depraved Nature, than what *God* prescribes: which is the very Reason that induces Men to change the *Institution of God*, and substitute their own *Inventions* instead of them. A thing that would never come into any Man's Mind, if he did not find more Ease or Gratification to his Humour in them, than in observing *God's* Commandments.

If it were proper to referr you to the History of the Church, you would find that most of all the Corruptions in the *Worship of God*, were introduced by the Fondness and violent Inclinations of the People for them; and that the Church Governours did long oppose them, and were brought with difficulty at last to comply with them. Thus the Worship of Images, Prayers for the Dead, Purgatory, the Intercession of Saints, Half-Communion, being present at Church-Assemblies without Receiving the *Lord's Supper*, and Worshipping the Host, were all Vulgar Practices at first, against the Opinion of the Governours of the Church, who generally Opposed and Condemned them; but being Humane Inventions, the People were so violent for them, that there was no withstanding them; so that if the Governours they had, would not comply, the People did set up those that would.

Now let me entreat you to reflect a little, and consider with all seriousness, whether there may not be something like this in your own Case, especially in the Matter of Extemporary Prayers. It is plain, you have brought them into Practice, against the Opinion and Constitution of the Church Governours, and of the first Reformers, who all did settle *Liturgies* in the Churches which they Reformed: This *Knox* did in *Scotland*, whose *Liturgy* we have ready
to

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to produce, to the Conviction of those who pretend to be his *Successors*, and yet condemn *Forms of Prayer* as Unlawful. This *Luther* did for *Germany*, and *Calvin* for *Geneva*, and for the *French Church*, whose *Liturgies* are still used by them. Yet I find this weighs not much with you, tho' you seem to me to have little to oppose to it, besides a strange *Fondness* and *Passion* you have entertained for the contrary. And let me tell you, That it is no hard matter to give a Reason why the generality of the People are better pleased with such *Extemporary Prayers*, than with *Forms*: For can any one wonder that a Prayer which *People* never heard before, and is adapted to the *Fancies* and *Humours* of a *Party*, with all the Advantages which *Novelty* gives, should gratifie carnal and itching Ears, more than the fix'd and settled Prayers of a Church, or that *Form* dictated by Christ Himself? To join in these with *Devotion*, requires us duly to prepare our Hearts, to strain and lift up our Minds with much Seriousness and Attention, or we cannot be affected by them; whereas there is a Pleasure, and a kind of sensual Delight in the Novelty of the other *Prayers*; and the Tone with which they are sometimes delivered, makes the Hearers imaginarily devout, though they come to them without taking Pains to strain their Minds to true *Devotion*. But you ought to remember, that *Images*, and *Reliques*, and *Mediatory Saints*, had the very same Effect on People long ago; which made them so fond of them, that they brought them into their *Worship*, in spite of the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, as you have now brought in *Extemporary Prayers*: But 'tis rare to find the generality of Men fond of what is truly Spiritual: And therefore Peoples Fondness of your peculiar Way of *Worship*, is so far from being an Argument for it, as I find some of you use it, that, on the contrary, it is a shrewd Presumption that it is not
from

from God; especially since ill People are fond of it, as well as good: as is manifest from many undeniable Instances; which could not be so, if it were truly and of it self Spiritual.

3. I would desire you to consider, That nothing can generally induce *Our Clergy* to decline these *Extemporary Prayers*, but their *Conscience* and *Conviction* that they are not convenient in the Publick Service of God. 'Tis manifest, that *Extemporary Prayers* would be much more easie to most of us, and less burthensome than the Service we use: *You* may think otherwise, but assure your selves that you are mistaken; and I dare appeal to those that have tried *both*, whether is most easie: There are such both amongst *You* and *Us*, who have made the Experiment; and I dare referr it to them to declare, on their *Consciences*, which of the two Services they look on to be the greater burthen to him that performs them. Whatever *You* may think, if we would indulge our selves, it were no hard matter for the meanest of *Us* to pass an *Extemporary Prayer* on our *Auditory*, or to turn the Heads of our Sermon into one.

Lastly, I have one thing which I would more especially request of *You*, That you would believe that I sincerely and heartily desire and study the good of *your Souls*; and that I have in this Treatise endeavoured to promote it, and by *God's Assistance* ever shall in all my *Undertakings*.

And if *You* had the same Apprehensions with *Me*, *You* would not wonder at my Concern in this Matter; for how is it possible that any Man that has a Zeal for the *Purity of God's Worship*, should not have his *Spirit* moved within him, to see a Well-meaning People so strangely mis-led, as to content themselves to meet together, perhaps for some Years, with a design to *Worship God*, and yet hardly ever see or hear any thing of *God's immediate Appointment in their Meetings*. Now, to my thoughts, this is manifestly the Case
I of

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of many of *You* ; since a Man may frequent some *Meetings* amongst *You* for some Years, and never hear a *Prayer*, a *Psalms*, or *Chapter* which has been immediately dictated by God, and never be called on to bow his Knee to God, or see either *Minister* or *People* address themselves to Him in that humble Posture : Lastly, Never see any Body offer to Administer, or desire to Receive the *Food of Life* in the *Lord's Supper*. These are Melancholy Reflections to me, who believe that God has required these in His *Worship* ; and therefore I hope *You* will take it in good part, that I endeavour to restore them to *You*.

I have only to add my most earnest Prayers to God for *You* : And to beseech Him who is the God of Mercy, and Purchaser of his Church, by a Price inestimable, to vouchsafe his Blessing to these my Endeavours for *your Souls Instruction* ; That *You* may reap the Benefit, and I the Comfort of them, in the Great Day of Our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who only is the True Teacher of Souls by his Spirit, and is able to Seal the *Instructions* of his Ministers to *Your Hearts*, to open the Eyes of *Your Understandings*, and to guide *You* into all *Truth*.

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